

**The Enlightenment
and the Birth of
Modern Nationhood**

*Polish Political Thought
from Noble
Republicanism to
Tadeusz Kościuszko*

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*To my Australian
and American friends*

Contents

Preface	ix
1. The Noble Republicanism of the Age of Enlightenment	1
2. The Enlightenment Concept of the Law of Nations	28
3. Stanislaw Staszic	38
Early Political Writings	38
Philosophy of History	48
Post-Partition Writings	57
4. Hugo Kollataj *	63
The Sovereign Nation	63
A Nation of Property-Owners	67
The Homogeneous Nation	71
The Nation of the People	77
Post-Partition Writings	82
5. A Few Conclusions	88
6. The Legacy of the Enlightenment and Some New Dilemmas in the Political Thought of Tadeusz Kosciuszko*	94
Appendix: Kosciuszko in English Poetry: Three Sonnets	127
Notes	133

Preface

There are several reasons why I have decided to write the present book.

The first has to do with the intrinsic importance of the subject matter and the notorious ignorance of it in the West. As I have argued elsewhere, "one cannot understand the rise of modern nationalism in Europe without a good knowledge of Polish nationalism and the Polish national-liberation movement." ¹ This certainly encompasses Polish romantic nationalism and Polish nation-forming and modernizing ideologies in the Age of Enlightenment. I shall try to show in this book that some influential views on nationalism and on the nation-building processes in East-Central Europe, views which are almost universally accepted in the United States, are simply wrong and misleading, and that the main reason for this is inadequate knowledge of Polish history. Thus, for instance, Hans Kohn's typology of nationalism² develops the theme of contrasting two models of national development—that of the West and that of the Central and Eastern Europe—and in so doing stresses certain features of the "national awakening" movements of East-Central Europe, but completely ignores the case of Poland, the largest state of the region. In other words, his typology is based upon an interpretation (somewhat one-sided, one might add) of the nation-building processes among the stateless, "nonhistorical" peoples of East-Central Europe only. It disregards the circumstance that the Poles, who were, after all, the most numerous people of the region, were a "historical" nation—a nation whose national

consciousness had reached quite an advanced stage of development under conditions of its own statehood. ³

My second reason has to do with the neglect of Polish history in general, and Polish intellectual history in particular. Eleven years ago Norman Davies published a bibliography of works on Polish history available in the major Western languages. This surprisingly small book, which dealt primarily with works in English but which also included some works in French, German, and Italian, convincingly corroborates Davies' statement that "despite Poland's central position in European history, serious study of the subject outside Poland has tended to be rather peripheral."⁴ What is true in general about Polish history is even more true about Polish intellectual and cultural history. It is quite revealing that the relevant section of Davies' bibliography contains only eight pages and that the subsection devoted to the Enlightenment includes only seventeen entries (among them, only one full-length book in English).⁵

Of course, Davies' bibliography does not reflect the visible increase of interest in Poland which followed the Solidarity revolution in 1980–81. This increase of interest in Polish history and culture is not yet visible, however, in the field of eighteenth-century studies. This is regrettable because, as Robert R. Palmer pointed out, the "Polish eighteenth-century revolution" was an integral and important part of "the age of democratic revolution" which gave birth to the modern world.⁶ We have been celebrating two important events of that time: the American Bicentennial and the bicentenary of the American Constitution.⁷ Very soon the historians of the entire world will celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution. In writing this small book I wanted (and this is my third reason) to make a modest contribution to the commemoration of the bicentennial of two Polish events of the same historical epoch: the convocation of the so-called Great Diet in 1788 and the Constitution of May 3, 1791. After all, the contemporaries of all these events were not

mistaken in linking them together as signs of a universal renewal of the world. ⁸

The main reason for devoting the final part of this book to the thought of Tadeusz Kosciuszko is, of course, my conviction of its relevance and importance for my topic. There is also an autobiographical component in this decision, however, which need not remain concealed. In the years 1981–86, I was a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra, and at the end of 1986 I moved to the United States to take a professorial position at the University of Notre Dame. The highest mountain in Australia is called Mount Kosciuszko, but, as I quickly became aware, the Australians, as a rule, do not know who Kosciuszko was. Some of them think that he was a chief of local aborigenes. Now I am living in northern Indiana, near to Kosciuszko county, but I have no illusions as to the level of knowledge about Kosciuszko among Americans. Vice-President George Bush was greatly exaggerating when he said, during his recent visit to Poland, that the names of Kazimierz Pulaski and Tadeusz Kosciuszko are well known to every American child. I am not greatly concerned by this, but I am concerned about the lack of interest in Kosciuszko among American historians and by their lack of awareness of the fact that he was not only a soldier but also a thinker. While still in Australia, a country rightly proud of its multiculturalism, I decided to do something to improve this sad state of affairs. After all, Kosciuszko was once well known to all educated people in the West, and his name was lauded by Western poets.⁹ He certainly does not deserve to fall into oblivion, or to be treated as a figure of merely local historical importance.

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1—

The Noble Republicanism of the Age of Enlightenment

It may perhaps seem strange that a study of the idea of the nation in Polish Enlightenment thought begins with a discussion of noble republicanism. Certainly it requires some explanation. We have been accustomed to identifying eighteenth-century noble republicanism with anti-Enlightenment Sarmatism, and to employing a simple scheme of analysis which contrasts the old Polish idea of the "nation of the nobility" with the modern concept of the nation, which was antifeudal in terms of society and apparently had nothing in common with the republican tradition of the nobility. Admittedly, this scheme has already been seriously challenged by several important studies which have appeared in recent years.¹ But force of habit is not easily broken by logical argument.

In order to understand the relationship between republican ideas and the modern idea of the nation, it is first necessary to clarify these concepts. The Enlightenment concept of the nation—in Poland and in Europe as a whole—was generally political rather than ethno-linguistic and denoted the whole body of "active citizens," or the whole population of the state without reference to ethnic or cultural differences. It is therefore possible to conclude that it was basically an anachronistic concept which had little in common with the modern nation-building process; it is also possible to attempt—like J. Szacki—to argue that it was not the idea of

the nation that was characteristic of Enlightenment culture, but the idea of the "fatherland" as a "certain state territorial community." ² This however seems to lead nowhere, since it assumes that a nation in the political sense is something different from a nation in the "correct" sense of the word. And yet this is neither obvious nor compatible with the extensive and growing academic literature on the genesis of modern nationalism in the broad, axiologically neutral sense of the term. ³ In this literature, especially in the English-speaking world, the predominant tendency is to trace the origins of modern nationalism back to Enlightenment thought ⁴ and to link its genesis with the birth of the political concept of the sovereignty of the people, which was placed in opposition to traditional legitimism. ⁵

The idea of a typological distinction between the concepts of the "political nation" and the "cultural nation" was first developed at the beginning of this century in Meinecke's classic study, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*. The bonds cementing "cultural nations" are language and a common cultural heritage, while in "political nations" they consist in a common political history and legal system. "Political nationalism" originated in the spirit of the French Revolution, in the ideas of self-determination and the sovereignty of the people, and in aspirations to political subjectivity. As such, it is a product of the Age of Enlightenment and was most perfectly embodied in the French nationalism of the period of the revolution and Napoleonic wars. "Cultural nationalism," on the other hand, which aims to express and reinforce the collective identity of the nation, originated in a protest against the leveling universalism of the Enlightenment; its most perfect, "model" manifestation can be found in German Romanticism. The strength of "cultural" nationalism lies in its profound grasp of the significance of the irrational components of national bonds, and its weakness in its failure to understand the need for political and legal unification and for the absolute sovereignty of the state. It is for precisely this reason that the nationalism of the German Romantics

could be linked with idealization of the feudal particularism of Germany and with nostalgia for medieval universalism. Meinecke concluded from this that the highest form of nationalism was a combination of the "cultural" and "political," and that its highest goal was a culturally homogeneous and absolutely sovereign nation-state—*Nationalstaat*.⁶

We can find a similar typological distinction in Roman Dmowski's brochure *Problems of Central and Eastern Europe*, published in London in 1917. Dmowski argued that the politicians who were to determine the new European order should be aware of the fundamental difference between the idea of "state nationality" and the idea of "linguistic, or in other words ethnographic, nationality." The first idea was predominant in Western Europe, since in that area state frontiers had been more or less permanently established in the Middle Ages, and their inhabitants, although they might differ ethnically and linguistically, had lived from generation to generation within the framework of the same state organisms. But the second idea was predominant in Central and Eastern Europe, where state frontiers had been unstable, and the bonds tying populations to the state had been much weaker than in the West, and at times even—as in the case of Poland—practically nonexistent. In this part of Europe it was linguistic community which constituted the most important nation-building factor. Italy and Germany represented an intermediate case: their western frontiers had been established on the basis of the "state" concept—for the Italian- and German-speaking sections of the French population did not question their political membership of the French nation—, while their eastern frontiers should be drawn on the basis of linguistic criteria.⁷

Two years after writing this brochure, Dmowski signed the Versailles Peace Treaty on behalf of the reborn Polish state. However, the new European order did not fulfill the hopes that had been placed in it. The newly formed Central European states did not bring about the stabilization of Europe: they were torn by national minority conflicts and did not—

with the single exception of Czechoslovakia—manage to sustain democratic forms of government; they evolved in the direction of a right-wing, anti-minorities, antisemitic nationalism, while at the same time proving incapable of developing strong state structures which could withstand German expansionism. Meanwhile in Germany, Nazism, which brought in its wake the Second World War and the extermination of the Jews, was victorious. These circumstances led a considerable number of Western European and American scholars to adopt an exceptionally critical and suspicious attitude toward the whole tradition of German nationalism, not only to Bismarck, but also to the legacy of the German Romantics. At the same time, they cast doubt on the viability of the smaller Central European nationalities, and therefore on the validity of the decisions of the Versailles Treaty and the principles of national self-determination on which they were based.⁸

An emotional need developed to place blame for the European catastrophe exclusively upon Germany and her eastern neighbors, explaining and rationalizing it by the theory that the Central and Eastern European countries were culturally and politically inferior. A classic and particularly suggestive example of this kind of theory is what is termed "Hans Kohn's dichotomy," which was put forward by the most prolific and influential American expert on the comparative history of nationalisms.⁹ This contends that from the very beginning—that is, from the eighteenth century—modern European nationalism was divided into two diametrically opposed types: Western nationalism and the nationalism of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The former aimed at an open and pluralist society, while the latter aspired towards a closed and monolithic society with authoritarian government; the former was a product of the Enlightenment, originating in an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the cause of humanity, while the latter originated in an atmosphere of xenophobia and set itself narrow, particularist, and ethnocentric goals; the former saw the nation as a political community based on the principle of the active consent of the governed, expressed in contracts,

elections, and plebiscites, while the latter was based on the prepolitical, irrational folk community—*das Volk*; the former defended the rights of man and of the citizen, while the latter, obviously, defended only the rights of the supraindividual community, yielding to the extravagances of imagination unfettered by reason and to dangerous mass emotions; the former expressed a self-confidence born of rationalist optimism, while the latter compensated for its inferiority complex with irrational national megalomania. To sum up: Western nationalism was "good" nationalism—humanitarian and progressive; Central and Eastern European nationalism, on the other hand, was "bad" nationalism—pathological, born of backwardness, and from its inception carrying the seeds of the horrors of the twentieth century. ¹⁰

It would not be too difficult for a critic of Kohn's theory to demonstrate that all the characteristics which he regards as specific to Central and Eastern European nationalism could also be found in Western Europe. But in the present context, Kohn's dichotomy is of interest as a typological concept which is closely allied to the typology of Meinecke and Dmowski. Nationalism of the "Western" type is basically "political" nationalism (Meinecke), or the nationalism of "state nationalities" (Dmowski), while the nationalism that invokes the pre-political ethno-linguistic community, which in Kohn's view is typical of Central and Eastern Europe, is the type proper to "stateless nationalities"—like the small Slav nations of the Hapsburg Empire—and also to nations which have a clear awareness of their own separate cultural identity but are deprived of political unity—like pre-Bismarckian Germany.

We now return to Polish matters. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Poles did not have a state of their own, and the efforts of the partitioning powers were directed towards reducing them to a "stateless nation"; however, in the eighteenth century, despite all her weaknesses, Poland had undoubtedly been a "state nation," attached to her political institutions and shaped by their prevailing influence. Furthermore, if we accept Kohn's thesis that the

"Western" type of nationalism is linked with the idea of the sovereignty of the people, with "limited" and contractual government and a constitutional concept of the state, and that it cannot be reconciled with absolute monarchy and is unthinkable without the idea of political democracy, then we must accept that in eighteenth-century Poland, and thus in the major part of Central and Eastern Europe, conditions for this "Western" type of national consciousness were much better met than they were in other European countries. Obviously we must not forget that in Poland it was only the nobility that enjoyed political liberty and civil rights. At the same time, we should remember that this was an exceptionally large group with internal class differences—10 percent of the total inhabitants of the state, including 25 percent of the Catholic population and 60 percent of the nobility was landless¹¹—and that in England, which Kohn considered the best example of the positive characteristics of "Western" nationalism, the number of citizens entitled to vote in parliamentary elections amounted to only 3.2 percent of the total population even after 1832. In the bourgeois France of Louis Philippe, only 1.5 percent of the population was enfranchised.¹² Moreover, there is a great deal of truth in Meinecke's contention that "a nation is by nature always *par pro toto*," or in other words, that national consciousness is always—at least before the epoch of the political emergence of the masses—stirred and spread by some active minority or another.¹³

The Polish "noble nation" took shape not as an ethno-linguistic nation, but as a political nation *par excellence*, to use Meinecke's terminology, united by a "common history and constitution," wishing to take its political destiny into its own hands. The cultural and religious homogenization of the nobility was undoubtedly a major factor in national consciousness, but this appeared only as a result of common political development, of acceptance of common political ideals by the ethnically and linguistically differentiated nobility of the Commonwealth. "Being a Pole" denoted not ethnic

but political affiliation: eloquent testimony to this is provided by the phrase "*gente Ruthenus /vel Lithuanus,/ natione Polonus*." If by "nationalism" we understand the according of priority to loyalty to the "nation" in some form or other—rather than loyalty to the church, a feudal overlord, or an absolute monarch—then we have to conclude that the Polish nobility were deliberately "nationalistic" from the very beginnings of "noble democracy." From this point of view, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, who postulated equality before the law for all inhabitants of the state and the nationalization of the church, should be treated as one of the first theoreticians of political "nationalism."

Thus, the application of Kohn's theory of nationalism to the history of Poland leads to a conclusion completely incompatible with his thesis that "it was not the Western but the German form of nationalism that awakened nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe."¹⁴ Polish "nationalism," in Kohn's sense of the term, originated as a "political" nationalism, a nationalism of a definitely "Western" type. One might here risk the assertion that its origins were earlier than those of either French or German nationalism. For the civic consciousness of the Polish nobility at the height of noble democracy was one of the most important and mature manifestations of "political nationalism" in the first period of modern European history.

In eighteenth century Poland, things were completely different. We find a tragically weak and backward country, with an anachronistic economic, social, and administrative structure; a degenerate noble democracy which had in fact turned into an oligarchy of the great magnates, with its legislature paralyzed by the *liberum veto*—which had, in its day, counter to the usual easy generalization, played a useful and integrating role;¹⁵ a state which had become a passive object and not a subject in European politics, where the "Sarmatian republicanism" of the nobility had become the predominant ideology of conservatism, opposed to modernizing reforms and petrifying the estate-exclusiveness of the "noble nation." Therefore,

in the reform party, which was represented in particular by the powerful "family" of the Czartoryskis, there was a universal conviction that the *sine qua non* for modernization of the state was the strengthening of executive power by replacing the "republican" or elective monarchy by a *hereditary* constitutional monarchy.

All this is true, but it is not the whole truth. Firstly, and I shall come back to this, the leaders of the reform party were monarchists not so much from conviction as from necessity. They wanted to modernize and rescue Old Polish liberty, but not to give up basic republican values. Secondly, the statement that Sarmatian republicanism became the predominant ideology of conservatism by no means implies that all contemporary "republicans" were Sarmatian conservatives. In eighteenth-century Polish thought, we can observe an interesting process whereby Sarmatian republicanism was transformed into "Enlightened" republicanism, reinforcing Old Polish ideals with an Enlightened critique of absolutism,¹⁶ and attempting to strengthen and restore the state without increasing the prerogatives of the throne. Admittedly this trend proved weaker than that of Enlightened monarchism, but nonetheless it remains an important link in intellectual history and proof of the continuity of the republican tradition in Polish thought, which enables us to understand better the fervent republicanism of the great romantic historian, Joachim Lelewel and the democratic national liberation movement of the era of Romanticism.

It has quite correctly been pointed out that the political thought of the Saxon period, the thought of the forerunners and first representatives of the Enlightenment—Stanisław Leszczyński*, and Stanisław Konarski—was based on republican assumptions.¹⁷ It did not aim to reinforce royal power (on the contrary, it wanted to limit it still further), but to improve the decision-making process, or in other words to strengthen the position of the nobility in the Sejm. It was only in the mature, central period of the Enlightenment, in the reign of Stanisław August, that monarchism came to the

fore in Polish Enlightenment thinking. To be more precise, this occurred only after the defeat of the Confederation of Bar (1768–72). But this was only a relative victory. The "old republicanism" did not surrender and disappear from the Polish scene. On the contrary, it became ideologically stronger, more self-conscious, more ready to modernize itself and, thus, better equipped for contributing its share to the process of creating a modern national consciousness in Poland.

The most famous commander of the Bar confederates was Kazimierz (Casimir) Pulaski, who, along with Tadeusz Kosciuszko, later became an American national hero. His father, Józef, the starost (governor) of Warka, was one of the founders of the Confederation. This is sufficient reason to ask about the relationship between Pulaski's republicanism and the ideals of the American revolution. To what extent are we justified in thinking that the socially conservative "noble republicanism" of the Bar confederates could have something in common with the modern "bourgeois-democratic" republicanism of the American revolutionaries?

As a rule, Marxist historians have answered this question in the negative: "noble republicanism" was a "feudal" ideology and could not bear genuine resemblance to progressive "bourgeois" ideas. From this perspective Kosciuszko's fight for American freedom could be seen as an ideologically motivated choice while Pulaski's participation in the American Revolution has to be treated as a rather curious historical accident. This approach even found expression in a book on Pulaski which was specially written for American readers. In it we read:

It would be an exaggeration to see in Pulaski's decision to go to America an act of solidarity with the spirit of republicanism. This was simply his only chance to leave Europe in which there was no room for a man tainted with the charge of regicide. . . . Animosities between the French and the British were foreign to Pulaski. Foreign to him too were republi-

can ideals. His fight as a Bar confederate had been to widen the privileges of the gentry rather than to overthrow the king. The idea of equality was only understood by him in so far as it applied to the interests of the gentry." ¹⁸

In this interpretation, the term "republican" and the fact that the Bar confederates saw their movement as ardently republican and praised themselves as (to quote from their famous song) "never entering into alliances with kings," were simply dismissed as a sort of terminological misunderstanding.

Happily, such views are no longer representative of mainstream Polish historiography; in fact, they directly contradict its recent findings in the light of which the Bar Confederation no longer appears as an unambiguously conservative movement.¹⁹ Of course, no one denies that the Confederation was fighting not only against the Russian interference in Polish affairs but also against progressive reforms, such as strengthening executive power and giving full political rights to religious dissidents (protected by the Russian Empress and other foreign monarchs). Nobody tries to conceal that its ideology was permeated by "Sarmatism," i.e., gentry traditionalism, extolling ancient customs and combining ardent republicanism with equally ardent Catholicism and hostility towards everything foreign.²⁰ At the same time, however, the Bar movement is seen as combining the features of a traditionalist Polish confederation with those of a modern national uprising. It is rightly emphasized that it linked Sarmatian traditionalism with a sharp awareness of the threat to independence and also of the necessity for reform. In contrast to the Confederation of Radom (1767), it was not a movement of conservative magnates and their clients; it was rather a movement of small and middling nobility, who were brutally shaken from their torpor by the deeds of the Russian ambassador, Prince Nikolai Repnin, especially by his abduction of the patriotic senators and their deportation to Kaluga in Russia. These acts made them aware of their

responsibility for the fate of the country and, at the same time, of the necessity to free themselves from the tutelage of the great magnates, who came to be seen as traitors to the national cause. The ideology of the movement was retrospective (the proposal for a return to the spirit of the old laws from the heyday of the Commonwealth), conservative on religious questions, but *not* conservative in relation to the political status quo, which it wished to change fundamentally. But, above all, it marked an exceptionally significant moment in the history of Polish national consciousness: the moment of realization that the principle of national sovereignty, which was the cornerstone of republicanism, requires defence not only against danger "from within," but also, and at least to the same extent, against danger "from without." In this way the idea of the "nation of the nobility," which effectively opposed all attempts to introduce "*absolutum dominium*," was turned into a justification of the right of the Poles to independence. It was the moment when the Polish word "*niepodleglosc* *" (independence), a calque from the Latin *independentia*, had been coined.²¹ Small wonder, therefore, that the Bar Confederation became a school of active patriotism for at least two generations and that its legacy was to become idealized by the great prophetic poets of the Romantic epoch.²² And small wonder that it could decisively influence Pulaski's decision to fight for American freedom.

The most important ideological document of the Confederation of Bar is a book by Michal Wielhorski, Keeper of the Kitchens to the Grand Duke of Lithuania, entitled *O przywróceniu dawnego rzadu* według pierwiastkowych Rzeczypospolitej ustaw* (On the restoration of the former government according to the original statutes of the Republic), 1775. The author, who was brought up in France, and was at the same time deeply attached to the customs of his fatherland, was eminently suitable as an intermediary between the thought of the Enlightenment and Old Polish republicanism. It was he who inspired the treatises on Poland by Mably and Rousseau, of which he in turn made use in his own work. To sub-

stantiate his ideas he invoked not only the authority of the past, but also that of reason and nature, and he cited theories of John Locke as well as past Polish statutes. He began his book with the words, "Every state has a fundamental statute of government, which if it is grounded on the law of nature will lead to certain fortune. Our forebears were once authors of such a government in Poland."²³ The basis of this government, or, rather, political system,²⁴ was the principle of the sovereignty of the nation—the conviction that "legislative power and the highest sovereignty are right and proper to the nation alone."²⁵ Today it was necessary only to restore that system, prune it of deformations to which it had succumbed during the historical process, and thereby return to nature as the leaders of the Enlightenment recommended.

The historical moment at which the forebears of the Poles established the "fundamental statute" of their political system, was envisaged by Wielhorski as follows:

After the family of Lech had died away, the Nation . . . assembled at Gniezno, and fearing that the rule of one man should, according to the common course of things human, pass into tyranny, chose from among their number twelve of the most goodly men, whom they gave the name of voivodes, according to each a province, and instituting an army of a certain strength for its defense.

Such was the essential beginning of the Poles. The beginning of our name, of our orderly liberty, the provision of the authority of the voivodes, and the beginning, in the end, of the whole commonwealth.²⁶

Wielhorski's further arguments tend logically to the conclusion that republican principles had always been the moving spirit of the history of Poland. One might say that he provided a "republican synthesis" of "Polish history," which was Enlightenment in its style of thinking, but nonetheless in basic outline anticipated Lelewel's Romantic synthesis. This was strongly emphasized by Wladyslaw Smolenski* when he wrote,

Lelewel's views are nothing more than an amplification of the theories of Wielhorski and the republicans of the period of the Great Sejm. Despite differences in details, and Lelewel's incomparable superiority in the substantiation and precision of his argument, it is impossible to deny that these two generations, separated by the monarchical school, had a common starting point in their view of the past. Lelewel, like Wielhorski, sees the republican "fundamental statute" as the cornerstone of existence; to deviate from it would be a recipe for anarchy and final ruin. The only difference is that Wielhorski's socio-political ideal included only the nobility, while Lelewel elevated it to take in the plebeian element, the countless numbers of the masses.²⁷

The last sentence of this passage requires some commentary. Unlike the Sarmatian traditionalists, Wielhorski did not identify the Polish nation with the nobility, for he was aware that the "commonality" was also part of the nation, and that the principle of the "sovereignty of the nation" should entail the granting of political rights to the "commonality." He wrote, "It is a certain truth that to prevent the commonality from participating in government is an evident affront to fundamental liberty."²⁸ He explained the genesis of this "affront" in terms of the interests of the state: it had been necessary to accord special privileges to those who had defended Poland from attack by her neighbors. A contemporary scholar has however accurately pointed out that this was no argument for the further retention of noble privileges. "For it is readily noted that in fact at that time the nobility had ceased to play the role of defenders of the fatherland, and had transformed themselves from knights into landowners. It is even easier to show that since Wielhorski tried everywhere to unearth and restore the natural, 'fundamental statute of government,' it would have been inconsistent to continue to exclude the commonality from participation in 'the legislative power.' "²⁹

This scholar, Janusz Maciejewski, convincingly suggests

that Wielhorski, lacking the courage to question the privileges of the nobility directly, wished at least to make noble "republicans" consider the idea that the benefits of political liberty and equality should be shared at some point by all the inhabitants of the state. This hypothesis is borne out by the fact that Wielhorski made references in his argument to the error of the conviction that in Old Poland the peasants did not own land in their own right: this assertion was used to support the thesis that the "commonality" formed part of the nation and that basically there were no theoretical or historical reasons for refusing to grant them equality in civil rights.³⁰

Wielhorski's political program contained the suggestion that all officials—from district administrative officials to ministers—should be elected, and that they should be responsible to the local dietines or the Sejm. The king, deprived of power of patronage in this field, was to be treated not as a separate estate of the realm, but as "the first official of the Commonwealth,"³¹ and, incidentally, this was not only to be an elective office, but also one that could be withdrawn after a vote of no confidence in the Sejm. Wielhorski cited Mably's arguments in favor of introducing a hereditary monarchy in Poland and refuted them with a scheme for avoiding potentially dangerous periods of interregnum without abandoning the republican principle of election. This concept provided that election of a future king would take place annually in secret ballots at the dietines. There would be no disputed candidacies, since the only candidates automatically eligible for the royal office would be worthy ex-ministers. The electoral urns would be sealed and taken to Warsaw, where they would be kept in the Senate chamber. After the death or abdication of a king, they would be opened, the votes counted, and the candidate with the most votes would be placed on the throne. This project would reduce the periods of interregnum to merely a few days, and the general and secret ballot would prevent the purchase of votes by foreign powers or rival magnates. Wielhorski informed his readers that Mably himself had, on hear-

ing these proposals, acknowledged their superiority to the idea of a hereditary monarchy. ³²

A comparison of Wielhorski's work with Rousseau's *Considerations sur le gouvernement de la Pologne*, which he himself inspired, is extremely interesting. Wielhorski definitely and unreservedly rejected the *liberum veto*, while Rousseau argued that the legislative ideal is unanimity, that the will of the whole is not the same thing as the will of a mechanical majority, and that sometimes it can be expressed in a heroic veto by an individual. The views of the author of the *Considerations* thus significantly coincided with the traditional ideology of the Polish nobility, where the cult of unanimity and belief in its reality accompanied the conviction that "one honest" defender of liberty alone could sometimes save it by his protest in the teeth of the corrupt or deluded majority.³³ Moreover, Rousseau differed from Wielhorski in his greater dislike of innovation, his constantly repeated warnings against the Europeanization of Poland, and also in his concept for limiting candidates for office to an elite and hierarchical group of "active members of the Republic."³⁴ Rousseau's enthusiasm for Polish republican institutions was not diminished by the fact that they were exclusively noble institutions. But he was shocked by the fact that not only the Sejm but also the Senate was endowed with "legislative power" in Poland. This in fact accorded with Wielhorski's views, for the latter proposed to deprive the Senate of its legislative function, turning it into the "guardian and interpreter of laws." Rousseau essentially ignored the situation of the peasants—as indeed he ignored the position of the helots in ancient Sparta—advising that first it was necessary to liberate their souls, and only thereafter their bodies.³⁵ In his concept of the nation he placed great emphasis on the nonpolitical factors in national bonds, such as a community of traditions and customs. Wielhorski, on the other hand, concentrated on the question of "sovereignty," the political subjectivity of the nation. All this makes it clear that the author of *Le Contrat social* on many issues took a more "Sar-

matian" line than did the ideologist of the Confederation of Bar.

Let us now turn to the last years of the era of Stanislaw August: the years of the Great Sejm and the Constitution of May 3. At this time we can observe a major wave of political and publishing activity, and at the same time deepening internal divisions in the republican camp. On the right wing stood Field Hetman Seweryn Rzewuski, who in 1767 had been abducted by Repnin, the omnipotent Russian ambassador, to Kaluga; in the near future he was to be the leading architect and ideologist of the Targowica Confederation. On the left wing was Wojciech Turski ("Adalbert, the Sarmatian"), an admirer of the Jacobins who, thanks in part to Rousseau, at the same time did not abandon evident sympathy for the republican ideals of Sarmatism.

Rzewuski's best-known contribution to the debate was his brochure, *O sukcesji tronu w Polsce rzecz krótka* (Of the succession to the throne in Poland in brief), 1789. Here it is striking that the author's arguments against hereditary monarchy do not really contain any specifically conservative elements, as, for example, appeals to historical law and time-honored national tradition; on the other hand, there are frequent expressions of admiration for the antimonarchical revolutions of the eighteenth century. This ideologist of magnate conservatism recounts the story of the fall of the Bastille with satisfaction: "On July 14 in the current year, I watched while the French Nation took that stronghold, cut off the commandant's head, and so shattered its walls, which had seemed unbreachable, that no stone remained standing." ³⁶ He was a fervent admirer of the American Revolution: Franklin and Washington—"those honorable souls, to whom the Americans owe their liberty, the whole world owes honor and admiration, and the Poles example"³⁷—in his opinion had proved that a free nation could successfully manage without kings and that if it were necessary to choose between a hereditary monarchy and a government without a king, it was better to choose the latter. He treated liberty as

an autonomous value more important than security and prosperity.³⁸ He was not convinced by arguments that a hereditary monarchy could be reconciled with liberty, arguments supported by the example of England. For what kind of freedom could be found in England? The king of England could not be brought before a court; he had the power of veto, declared war and peace, controlled the army, dissolved parliament, nominated judges, and was even head of the church. If all this was synonymous with liberty, then there was liberty in Moscow and Prussia, while in Poland there was slavery.³⁹

There are a few fragments in the brochure which clearly reveal the author's social conservatism. One is the argument that a hereditary monarch could "incite the serfs, in order that, the peasant estate having defeated the noble estate, he might place a yoke on the neck of both."⁴⁰ But in the context of the history of the idea of the nation in Polish thought, the most important aspect is the quite astonishingly paradoxical, if explicable, fact that in the eyes of this future leader of the Targowica Confederation, the revolutionary mob storming the Bastille was not a disorderly rabble but the French Nation, fighting for its just rights.

The "center" position in the republican camp was occupied by Adam Wawrzyniec Rzewuski, the Castellan of Vitebsk and author of a book entitled *O formie rządu* republikańskiego* myśli* (Reflections on the forms of republican government), 1790. This work, which quite unjustifiably is almost entirely forgotten, has been called "the most outstanding synthesis of political thinking that was produced by the Old Noble camp."⁴¹

It begins with a discussion of the need for national education—one which would go beyond the individual and cosmopolitan upbringing to which Locke and Rousseau had devoted so much attention. Young people should be brought up for public and national life, for without education of this kind, a nation, and in particular a free nation, could not exist.⁴² Mythology and poetry should be banished from a

republic, the former because it perverts religion, and the latter because, by betraying the heroic spirit of the old Hebrew hymns and psalms and the songs of the medieval bards, it destroys customs, spreads self-love, and honors despots.⁴³ The education of a free man in a free country should set itself three goals: "to attach him to the country and to liberty, to endow him with love for custom, and to fill his heart with hatred for slavery and tyrants."⁴⁴ To achieve this, Plutarch should be read with the pupil, and he should be offered the example of the free Dutch, Swiss, Americans and also the French, who had managed recently to throw off the yoke of slavery.⁴⁵ The English should also be held up to him as an example, since in the seventeenth century they had "furnished an astonished Europe with a prospect and example both honorable and stern that there is a court and punishment for a king if that king dares to trample on the sacred and undefiled laws of his people."⁴⁶

Later in the book, Rzewuski voiced a conviction particularly characteristic of contemporary Polish thought:⁴⁷ that every nation, including the colored peoples of America, Africa, and Asia who had been colonized by the Europeans, had an inalienable right to independence. He claimed that Polish educators should teach their students that a policy of conquest brings with it unhappiness not only to the conquered peoples, but also to the conquerors.⁴⁸ They should also demonstrate the intimate connection between conquest and despotism, and the equally close ties between republicanism and the bringing about of justice in relations between nations. Once despotism disappeared and republican liberty ruled the world, the law of nations, which presently was shamefully trampled in the dust, would at last become a reality.⁴⁹ Intoxicated with this idea, Rzewuski struck a prophetic note and outlined his vision of the future perpetual peace:

The time will come, for the light must necessarily spread from one end of Europe to the other, when the human nation

will regain its splendor and its rights, when all will be at liberty. Dear Lord! The light of your wisdom has even now entered the soul of this base mortal, filling it most strangely but exquisitely with perturbation and presentiment; the great barrier of the future is moved away before my eyes, and in place of those thirty extensive monarchies which now divide up the world amongst them, and in so doing set it at variance and tear it asunder, I see three hundred small republics; in them there is no war, for there are no kings, nor soldiers, but every man is a king, every man a soldier, that is: each rules and is himself at the same time ruled, and each in defending his fatherland defends himself, that is, his abode. No one attacks the territory of another, for he sees no advantage for himself in the conquest, nor indeed any means of capturing it. No city nor kingdom envies another in anything, for all shores, all seas, and all rivers are held in common.⁵⁰

This might be called a kind of cantonal utopia. It led logically to acquiescence in the subdivision of Poland—of course, only after the disappearance of the neighboring despotisms—into smaller territorial units (which would, incidentally, have complied with the advice given by Rousseau in his *Considerations sur le gouvernement de la Pologne*). Acquiescence in this came easily to Rzewuski, for he placed the highest value on freedom of the individual within the nation and not on the might and power of the state. In reply to that "miserable defense of coercion" which justified oppression by arguing that a nation governed by despotism was "more famed in history and larger upon the map," he wrote, "O benighted and imprudent slave! What is it to you if the nation wherein you dwell is ever more extensive, and your own nation is respected and great, if you yourself are disdained and wretched? Disdain is as bitter, and oppression as insufferable, whether it is foreign force or the arm of my own government that exercises it."⁵¹

Like Wielhorski, Adam Rzewuski was aware that the logical consequence of republican principles was the granting of

civil rights to the common people. He did not reject this conclusion. He professed, "Oh how I might wish that there were no privileged classes here, that instead of peasants and burghers there would be only people and Poles."⁵² He however rejected the immediate implementation of this goal, for, as he wrote, legislation "will be perfected with time and the example of the nations"; therefore even the most splendid idea should not be put into practice too early.⁵³ He included all the inhabitants of the state in his concept of the nation—this can be clearly seen in his statement that the kings oath at the *pacta conventa* was "an undertaking made to eight million people."⁵⁴ The nobility did not constitute the nation, but were the active representatives of the national whole. And this meant the whole of the nobility, not merely the landed nobility (*possessionati*). Rzewuski, in his opposition to a new dietine law depriving the impoverished nobility of their political rights, invoked Rousseau to demonstrate that poverty was not a crime nor a reason for loss of civil rights.⁵⁵ If the poor nobles had become tools in the hands of the magnate oligarchy, it was not their own fault but that of the magnates, and the guilt of the latter was all the greater in that they "are enlightened, know the laws of the land, feel the shame of crime and ignominious intrigue, and yet do not hesitate to give the signal for civil war." It was these "noble lords" who had demoralized the impoverished nobility, if was they who had begun to buy up the votes of electors and "set a price on elective office," and therefore it was they who should be debarred from the meetings of the dietines.⁵⁶ The poor nobles should however free themselves from the "lords," make themselves "truly independent," and spurn the superstition that prevented them from earning their living with their hands or from trade.⁵⁷

On the question of the burghers, the author's position was much more conservative. He did suggest the admission of representatives of the towns to the Sejm, but he made the reservation that two-thirds of these should be members of the nobility, and that they "should not participate to the least

extent in the government." On this question, his crowning argument was, as we might easily guess, the defense of liberty: the participation of representatives of the towns in government might be used to increase royal power.⁵⁸ The Enlightenment republicans never forgot the example of Sweden, where an alliance of the towns with the king had led to the introduction of absolutism.

The defense of liberty against royal usurpation was synonymous in the eyes of the author of these *Reflections* with defense of the sovereignty of the nation, which was fundamentally contradictory to royal sovereignty. Like Seweryn Rzewuski, he did not like English liberty: in England, he wrote, "you have no liberty, *you have no nation*, but there is a king and there is a ministry."⁵⁹ A nation exists insofar as it determines its own fate through its representatives—the Sejm. Unlike those who drafted the Constitution of May 3—who, in the words of B. Lesnodorski*, introduced a kind of "absolutum dominium" of the Sejm⁶⁰—the Castellan of Vitebsk was aware of the dangers of seymocracy. He demonstrated that every power, even the power of the nation, should be limited by law. To recognize the Sejm as a "sovereign lord" is the same as to hold that "despotism is unjust and fearful when vested in one man alone, but that the despotism of three hundred men is sweet and right and useful to the nation; for what is despotism, if not a power set above the law and all statutes?"⁶¹

But how can protection be afforded against the "autocracy" of the nation, what is the source of laws which the nation itself must obey? An answer might have been provided to that question by invoking the immutable law of nature or divine law; one might also follow the nineteenth-century liberals and their predecessors, the physiocrats, in restricting the concept of political power itself by completely excluding from it certain spheres of life, such as private life and economic activity. But Adam Rzewuski thought along quite different lines. Faithful to the ideological tradition of Polish noble democracy, he did not limit the sovereignty of the nation and did not a priori

remove anything from its authority, but he did seek to limit the arbitrariness of national representation by subordinating it to certain "fundamental laws," or "cardinal laws," which could only be changed by unanimous consent.⁶² He obviously rejected the compromised excesses of the *liberum veto*, and accepted the principle of a majority vote for normal legislative activity. On the other hand, however, in matters of fundamental importance concerning the "cardinal laws" of the system, he required not only a unanimous verdict of the deputies, but also unanimity in the mandatory instructions that they received from the dietines.⁶³ This was indeed in accordance with both the Old Polish tradition and Rousseau's "general will" which cannot be changed by some fortuitous majority.

The influence of Rousseau is quite clearly discernible in many passages of Rzewuski's book: in his bemoaning the decline in manners, his criticism of luxury, his appeals to "feeling hearts," in his condemnation of the "estate of lawyers," in his opposition to the professionalization of the apparatus of government, and in his exposition of "mutual friendship" as a basis for the republican system. These were themes totally characteristic of the republican current in Enlightenment thought. We are entitled to conclude that Adam Rzewuski, despite his links with the "old noble camp," primarily represented a noble variety of *Enlightenment* republicanism, or, to put it differently, an "enlightened" version of Sarmatism. The distance that separated him from primitive Sarmatian conservatism is eloquently attested to by the fact that he did not limit his criticism of the May 3 Constitution to the matter of hereditary monarchy, but also attacked the inadequate solution proposed to the peasant question. A month after the passing of the constitution, he wrote in a private letter: "I find the rights of the peasants included in the new constitution insufficiently clear and an inadequate assurance of the freedom and property of the poor yokel against the proud covetousness which will bring his undoing."⁶⁴

Wojciech Turski, another pupil of Rousseau and the most radical representative of contemporary Polish republican

thought, called himself an "Enlightened republican." ⁶⁵ In a brochure entitled *Mysli* o królach, o sukcesji, o przeszłym i przyszłym rządzie* (Reflections of kings, on the succession, on the past and future government), 1790, he did defend Seweryn Rzewuski's republicanism, but he also made it clear that he was not writing in defense of "old noble" liberty:

I do not speak for the specious cant of our alleged past liberty, I do not speak for a liberty which was not, but I speak for that liberty which I now enjoy and which awaits me in yet greater abundance. This can be gauged from all my work: that I am not swayed by timorous or blind attachment to the old government, nor by prejudice; it will be seen that I am for universal liberty, for liberty restrained on the leash of justice. . . . Perfect liberty has not yet existed in Poland, though there has been liberty; but perfect liberty is possible.⁶⁶

Turski rejected the idea of hereditary monarchy, not on the grounds of its incompatibility with the Old Polish tradition, but primarily because it contrasted with the revolutionary spirit of the eighteenth century.⁶⁷ He agreed with Seweryn Rzewuski that mild royal government was only a prelude to despotism and that there was no true liberty in England, so idealized by the members of the Patriotic Party. He argued that Poland could be simultaneously free, well-governed, and strong, but that the lesser of two evils was to be "a free citizen of a weak nation, rather than the slave of a strong one."⁶⁸ He was aware that hitherto only the nobility had constituted the "nation" in Poland, but he believed that the National Education Commission would awaken in the country "an enlightened spirit of liberty" and would involve wider groups of society in civil life.⁶⁹ Like other republicans, he came to the defense of the impoverished nobility, but in so doing made maximum efforts to ensure that this did not redound to the advantage of the magnates. He even proposed the introduction of a cardinal law that "no wealthy son should marry a wealthy daughter, and vice versa." This would, he claimed, make it possible to defend the impoverished nobility against

"coercion from wealthy citizens" and rescue them from "being courtiers in their lords' houses." ⁷⁰

In another of his brochures, Turski took issue with Kollataj's* criticism of the views of Seweryn Rzewuski and strongly emphasized that on many fundamental issues he disagreed with the standpoint of the Hetman's party. One could not and should not resuscitate the former system, or believe that the essence of liberty lay in free elections. The liberty that was at issue today was not liberty for the nobility but for the generality, which "has as many voices as there are souls in our nation."⁷¹ A beginning should be made by granting equal rights to the townspeople, although this must not be done in alliance with the king. The critics of Seweryn Rzewuski had spoken out "against the coercion of aristocrats, and for kings,"⁷² whereas in fact the strengthening of royal power was today in the interests of the rich and mighty; this was evidenced by Kollataj's treatise which "maintains the succession, destroys democracy, and leaves the aristocrats in possession of their power."⁷³ Aristocratic oligarchy and monarchy were not alternatives. Poles needed treatises that would speak "against the coercion of the aristocrats, for the nation and against kings."⁷⁴

Early in 1792, after the universal acceptance of the May 3 Constitution by the noble dietines, Turski published *Nawrócenie sie polityczne* (Political conversion), in which he accepted the work of the Great Sejm. "I do not feel in myself such pride," he wrote, "as to think that I, better than the whole nation, know what is for its good."⁷⁵ He suited action to words and took up arms against the Russian interventionary army called in by the Targowica Confederation. After the Targowica victory, he returned to his old standpoint, became an emigré, and pinned all his hopes on revolutionary, Jacobin France. On December 30, he stood before the Convention and made a fiery appeal for support of republican aspirations and Polish independence:

I do not stand before you as an aristocrat, . . . nor yet as a faithful and pliable servant of any master; . . . the ten million

individuals which compose the Polish nation—these are my master, this is my highest ruler. . . . Frenchmen, first nation of the world, we are your pupils; rays from the fires that you have lighted have reached the hearts of Poles; they warm them in the midst of oppression. Despite the presence of a hundred thousand barbarians who have overrun our country, the altar of liberty will not cease to stand amongst us; it is not overturned, it is only faltering. Frenchmen! Hold up that altar, whose highest priests you now are! ⁷⁶

According to Adam Próchnik, "the President of the Convention, Freilhard, in his reply gave forceful expression to the idea of the brotherhood of the two peoples and predicted that 'the moment is not far distant when both republics, the Polish and the French, having crushed all the instruments of the despots, will link hands in fraternal greeting and will enjoy in peace all the benefits of liberty and equality.' " This was followed by a symbolic act expressing Polish-French fraternity "in the form of a kiss exchanged between the two statesmen, the President of the Convention and the Polish envoy."⁷⁷

We now know that these words and gestures did not lead to a great deal. Even after the outbreak of the Kosciuszko insurrection, Jacobin France did not hasten to extend concrete help to Poland. Her possibilities were limited, and her sentiments were also not entirely unambiguous. It is true that Kosciuszko was known to be a republican; the initial manifesto of the insurrection stated that a future Sejm would determine the form of the political system in Poland, and therefore it de facto revoked the May 3 Constitution; despite this, however, it was clear that the insurrection would have to rely on the nobility. The French revolutionaries' idea of the nobility was shaped under the influence of circumstances in their own country; and the envoy of the Kosciuszko insurrection, the burgher Franciszek Barss, had patiently to explain that in Poland "three-quarters of the nobility are peasants,"⁷⁸ and that it was in fact the impoverished nobility, and

not the landowners and aristocrats, who formed the social base of the insurrectionary movement. The doubts of the Committee of Public Safety were further fanned by certain Polish emigrés who presented the Committee with what was called the Warrens Memorandum, in which they represented the Supreme National Council of the insurrection as men sold out to kings, feudalism, and the clergy, and proposed handing over the leadership of the movement to "Adalbert, the Sarmatian."⁷⁹

It is curious and regrettable that a figure as interesting as Turski has not yet been made the subject of a monographic study. In the literature on the period, the few mentions of Turski contain fundamentally differing assessments. Próchnik, who has paid relatively most attention to him, saw him as the most radical and most revolutionary writer of the period of the Great Sejm and a typical representative of "whole-hearted, honest and disinterested sympathy for France."⁸⁰ Marian Szyjkowski however considered Turski to be "the most extreme and most interesting Polish specimen of the degeneracy of political thought."⁸¹ This degeneracy was deemed to stem from his peculiar combination of defending Seweryn Rzewuski's position on the question of the succession to the throne while being sympathetic to the revolutionary ideas of the French Enlightenment.

But should this really be termed degeneracy? In fact it seems more of an instance in the regular path of development in Polish republican thought as it turned "Sarmatian republicanism" into Enlightenment republicanism and extended the concept of the sovereign nation to include all the inhabitants of the state. In social terms, the modern republican concept of the nation was opposed to the petrified concept of the "noble nation"; but in political terms, the idea of the sovereignty of the noble nation contained the seeds of the modern idea of the sovereignty of the nation both in its "internal" application—attacking monarchs by divine right—and in its "external" application—sanctioning the right to independence. It paved the way intellectually for this new concept, facilitating its recep-

tion. The influence was mutual, for we know that Polish noble republican ideas played a certain role in the genesis of the modern French concept of the sovereignty of the nation.⁸²

It is therefore not accidental that the first post-partition independence organization in Poland—the Society of Polish Republicans—had a specifically republican political program. Its basic policy statement, the "Pre-social statute" of October 1, 1798 contains a succinct and precise summary of the Enlightenment republican *political* concept of the nation:

The nation is formed through the law of nature alone. Government stems from the will of the nation. The nation stands before all things and is the source of all things. Its will is always law. Above it and before it is but the law of nature alone. By virtue of its very existence, the nation is all things that it may be. The nation cannot surrender its rights to a tyrant.⁸³

2—

The Enlightenment Concept of the Law of Nations.

One of the major milestones in the history of Polish thought is the work of the "Polish school of the law of nations."¹ This developed at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in connection with the conflict between Poland and the Teutonic Knights. During the hearing of the case between Poland and the Order at Buda in 1412–1414, Andrzej Laskarz argued that the use of force against "peaceful pagans" (*pogani pacifici*) was unjustified, that the unbeliever was our brother, towards whom we must be bound by the principles of the New Testament.² Stanislaw of Skarbimierz (Skalmierz) conceded to pagans property rights and the inviolability of their own states. Pawel Wlodkowic (Paulus Vladimiri), a professor of the Kraków University, in his address to the Council of Constance in 1415, condemned all invasive wars, including those waged to convert the heathen by force to Christianity. On this basis, he questioned the validity of the authorization obtained from the Holy Roman Emperor by the Teutonic Knights for the conquest of the pagan Prussians. In the following century, the concept of justice in relations between nations was further developed by the greatest Polish political thinker of the Renaissance, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski. He put forward the thesis that in international relations, all states, including non-Christian states, should be considered equal.³

Thus the Polish doctrine of the law of nations originated in

the context of violence committed in the name of Christ against Poland's northern neighbors. In the eighteenth century, interest in the law of nations was revived in Poland due to the violence committed by neighboring powers against Poland herself—in particular the shock of the first partition of the Commonwealth. The source which was generally used in this context was Emmerich de Vattel's *Le Droit des gens ou principes de la loi naturelle appliqués à la Conduite et aux affaires des nations et des souverains*, published in 1758.

These questions have been discussed in detail in another monograph.⁴ In the present context, I shall confine myself to indicating the most important issues from the viewpoint of the Enlightenment concept of the nation and relations among nations.

Above all, there was the question of national sovereignty. Following Vattel, Polish authors made the "political" nation, the nation state, the object of the law of nations and accorded full sovereignty to a nation of this kind. The Physiocrat Andrzej Poplawski, in a book published shortly after the first partition, put it as follows:

Every commonwealth, though its frontiers be most narrow, in respect of its rights in no way yields to the most extensive kingdom. . . . Every nation should be its own judge. . . . A foreign nation cannot prescribe rules for it, or with show of strength set laws for it, without violating its independence, which is the equal right of all countries in accordance with the laws of nature.⁵

Another Physiocrat, Hieronim Stroynowski, gave even more forcible expression to this idea in his *Nauka prawa przyrodzonego, politycznego, ekonomiki politycznej i prawa narodów* (The study of natural and political law, political economy and the law of nations):

It is a matter quite plain that every nation, considered as to the persons who comprise it, the land and goods it possesses, and the government and authority that determines all mat-

ters, as well as its defense, is a sovereign lord and entirely free proprietor, and in no way subordinate to other nations. And just as all men are equal in respect of the property and liberty that are their due, so all nations are by nature to this extent equal; the extensiveness or smallness of the country, its power and weakness, make no difference as to the sovereignty and independence of that country.⁶

It is striking that in these apt and unambiguous phrases he distinguishes between sovereignty in relations with other nations and the republican idea of the free sovereign nation as the highest power in its own country. Bishop Krzysztof Szembek dotted the *i*'s and crossed the *t*'s on this question when he stated in a speech at the Four Years Sejm. that "Persians and Turks lie under the yoke of slavery at home, together with their brother countries, but the Persian nation and the Turkish nation are reciprocally free, sovereign nations, excluding foreign power from government."⁷

These persistent reminders of the rights of nations to independence stemmed from bitter opposition to foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Commonwealth. The most humiliating form of this interference was, of course, the famous "guarantee" by the Empress of Russia. Here is what the authors of *O ustanowieniu i upadku konstytucji 3 maja 1791 roku* (On the institution and defeat of the Constitution of May 3, 1791) had to say on the subject:

That every nation is free and independent, that it is its own lord and master to decide for itself such form of government as it deems best, and that no foreign nation has the right to interfere in its constitution, this is the first and most important maxim of the law of nations, and in the light of the present age, so evident as to require no proof. A nation which has not the right to rule at home is no nation. A nation under a guarantee which a foreign power might use against it, is deprived of its dominion and stripped of that right which was the fount of its independence. . . .

No man casts doubt on the autocracy of the Polish nation.

This nation has always been seen as sovereign and independent. Moscow alone has made bold for some ten or more years to insist that the Polish Commonwealth, which is under her guarantee, has no power to change anything in its government without her consent.⁸

The second question which was continually raised by Polish lawyers and politicians of the Enlightenment period was that of making international politics subject to certain basic moral principles. Representatives of Polish enlightenment legal thought were usually determined opponents of Samuel von Pufendorf's view that in relations among states the "law of nature" reigned and could not be regulated by any positive law. They took the standpoint that in relations among nations (states) the same principles applied as in relations among individuals.⁹ In formulating these principles, they invoked not only Vattel, but also the Physiocrats' concept of the correlation between rights and duties. This was their original achievement, for in the West the Physiocrats did not influence concepts in the field of the law of nations.¹⁰

To avoid a multiplicity of example, I will quote only the arguments of Hieronim Stroynowski, who has already been mentioned, an author who in S. Hubert's view achieved "undoubted superiority to his French masters in the legal construction of his arguments."¹¹

Stroynowski reduced all the rights ("dues") of nations to the following four:

The first due of every nation is that other nations should not enter, should not violate its property, and should not hamper its liberty.

The second due resulting from this, and without which the first would be often precarious and vain, is that every nation may justly defend itself against violent attack and invasion by nations who would harm its property or liberty.

The third due of every nation is that agreements entered into with other nations should be faithfully observed.

And the fourth and last due of every nation is to receive from other nations mutual help and defense in time of need.¹²

There were four corresponding duties: not to violate the property and liberty of other nations, not to carry out violent attack or invasion, to keep agreements, and to extend aid to other nations in need. There was a further, fifth, duty which was to be binding even without reciprocity: the highest authority of every nation should settle all conflicts with other nations by negotiation and agreement, without resort to force.

To arrive at a proper assessment of the significance of Polish Enlightenment views on the law of nations, strong stress should be placed—as J. Tazbir has pointed out—on the lively interest shown in contemporary Poland with regard to the fate of the colored nations of America, Africa, and Asia who had been deprived of their independence. "The coincidence of two historical processes—the height of colonial rule by the Europeans and the gradual decline of the Commonwealth—meant that Polish opinion from the time of the Enlightenment exhibited considerable sympathy, compassion, and understanding for those American or Asian states which were suffering a similar fate thanks to the great age of discovery."¹³ There is in fact a very clear correlation here between the fate of the nation and the growth of its legal consciousness. Before the partitions, enlightened Poles—like other European peoples—were liable to narrow down the problem of justice and peace in relations among nations to relations among European nations; in a memorandum addressed to Louis XV, Stanislaw Leszczynski advised the King of France to place himself at the head of an association of states which would ensure the peace of Europe through a fair division of colonies among all European countries. After the first partition, Polish opinion very swiftly and without much resistance overcame the Europocentric approach and accorded the right to independence to all nations in the world without exception. In 1773, the Piarist Wincenty Skrzetuski formulated a sharp condemn-

nation of colonial conquest in America, and three successive editions of Jean François Marmontel's *Incas* (1781, 1794, and 1801) enjoyed enormous popularity along with other works, including plays, which celebrated the independence struggle of the Indian tribes in America. ¹⁴ Towards the end of the century, condemnation of colonial conquest became one of the standard themes in Polish writing. The ideology of the "Polish colonial alibi" took shape—an ideology which glorified the Poles for not taking part in conquests on other continents. ¹⁵ The Princess Izabela Czartoryska reverently collected at Pulawy mementos of every exotic civilization that fell to European conquerors, and in the long catalogue of these exhibits expressed particular sympathy for the Hindu states fighting against British colonialism.

According to S. Hubert, the last partition of the Commonwealth put an end to this lively phase in Polish studies of the law of nations: "Science, which had revived with such benefit to the Commonwealth, was to fall silent together with the disappearance of the Commonwealth from the political map of Europe. For more than a century, the study of the law of nations was to share the fate of the nation."¹⁶

There is some justification for this generalization if by the study of the law of nations we understand exclusively specialized legal studies, editions of international treaties, etc. But from the point of view of the history of the *idea* of the law of nations in Polish political and social thought, it is clearly unjustified. After the final dismemberment of the Polish state, it was no longer possible to defend the sovereign rights of Polish statehood with legal arguments. That sovereignty had simply ceased to exist. According to the classic view of the Enlightenment school of the law of nations expounded in Vattel's work, a state which was part of an "unequal alliance," or even a "vassal, tributary state," could be an object of the law of nations, but not a state which had ceased to exist and had been incorporated into others: "a people which has passed under the rule of another is no longer a state, and does not come directly under the law of nations."¹⁷ For this

reason, it no longer made any sense after 1795 to defend the rights of the Poles on the basis of the law of nations understood in this way. But this does not mean that the problem of national sovereignty and the legal guarantee of justice in international relations disappeared from Polish thought. It continued to attract attention, even if it was raised in different contexts and was formulated using different conceptual categories.

Above all, after 1795, Polish thought began to make an ever clearer distinction between the nation and the state. The first step in this direction was in fact taken before the fall of the state by the classic Enlightenment thinker, Franciszek Salezy Jezierski. In *Niektóre wyrazy* (A few words), 1791, he gave the following definition of a nation:

A nation is an assembly of people having a common tongue, customs, and manners, embraced within one, universal legislation which applies to all citizens. The nation and the government of the nation are things apart, although seemingly a nation cannot exist without a country, that is, without its habitation, and yet again, a country cannot exist without a government; all this is as I have stated, and is patently corroborated by experience. The Italian nation is a nation, and most evidently a nation apart from others, and yet the Italian nation has no government, nor law, nor power, and no one wages war nor concludes peace with the Italians; the whole nation has been recast into kingdoms, into commonwealths, into various forms of government and rule; it has lost that which lends dignity to the name of nations, but nonetheless its own accomplishments stand plain in its language, music, architecture and painting.¹⁸

The innovative nature of this distinction is attested for example in the words of the song which has become the Polish national hymn—"Crossing the Vistula, crossing the Warta, we shall be Poles"—for they suggest that to "be Poles" would be possible only after Polish statehood had been regained. Despite this, however, Polish thought of the

post-partition period made swift strides towards an amendment of Vattel's viewpoint, ensuring not only that nation-states, but also nations deprived of their own political institutions, were subject to the law of nations. This process was carried out gradually and sometimes unwittingly. In the majority of cases, the new concept of the nation appeared alongside, and coexisted with, the old one, without the concomitant complications and contradictions being clearly realized. I shall return to this question in later chapters. But to put it as briefly as possible, this was a transition from the Enlightenment concept of the nation-state to the Romantic concept of the nation as a "divine creation," contrasted with the state as an artificial, human creation. On the borderlines of these two concepts, we find the work of Prince Adam Czartoryski, especially his splendid *Essai sur diplomatie* (1830), which was inspired by the Enlightenment but which was already formulating the theses that nations were "individualities of mankind," "essential, natural and original sections" of the great association of the human race, that national ties were the only healthy basis for statehood, and that every nation—not state, but nation—had the right to liberty and security;¹⁹ and this right was curtailed only by the analogous rights of the remaining members of the great human family. At the height of the Romantic period, the nation was to be defined by its divine mission to fulfill the lofty destiny of mankind, while the state, depending on circumstances, was regarded as a help or hindrance in carrying out this mission. Defense of the inviolability of existing states, and thus the classic Enlightenment stance on the law of nations, was to be staunchly rejected since it was identified with the antinational principles of legitimism and with defense of the political status quo which was supported by the reactionary forces of the Holy Alliance. The juridical style of thinking was to make way for overarching historical and often religio-philosophical visions which expressed a longing for the complete regeneration of mankind. It was therefore not surprising that the idea of implementing the law of nations should be superseded by the

idea of "Christianizing politics"—an idea formulated in a different, nonjuridical language, but in fact expressing essentially the same longings and aspirations: an attempt to make political relations ethical, and to eliminate coercion and injustice from relations among nations. In this sense there was a clear continuity and ideological kinship between the Polish Enlightenment and Polish Romanticism.

Another consequence of the final fall of the Commonwealth was that the attention of Polish thinkers was directed towards ideas of creating an international security system in which the just rights of individual nations would be guaranteed by supranational institutions or at least by a new system of political balance in Europe. Interest was shown in Condorcet's idea that in order to retain their sovereignty, the peoples should join together in lasting solidarity, and in Kant's treatise on perpetual peace (1795) which developed the idea of a "federalism of free states" and condemned the use of force in international relations. The idea of an "association of nations" became, as we shall see, the keystone of Staszic's historiosophical concepts; Kant's treatise, correctly understood as a protest against the partitions of Poland, soon went into two Polish editions and was a major source of inspiration for the Society of Polish Republicans.²⁰ The expansion of Napoleonic France, and then the growing ascendancy of victorious Russia, again gave rise to hope that the rights of Poles could be reclaimed within the framework of a "Western Empire" (Kollataj*) or within the framework of a Russian Empire transformed into the common fatherland of all Slavs (Staszic). This latter trend, linked with the hope of putting into practice, at least in part, Kant's idea of "eternal peace," provides the key to understanding the activity of Adam Czartoryski as Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In a memorial entitled *On the political system to which Russia should adhere* (1803), Czartoryski proposed that Russian foreign policy should be based on the principle of the law of nature and directed towards the implementation of the idea of eternal peace. As has been pointed out, the ideas

voiced in this memorial coincided with those of Sully, Abbé de St. Pierre, Rousseau, and Kant.²¹ But above all they were a product of the "Polish school of the law of nations," as applied to the situation of Poland after the partitions. It was so because Czarotoryski was concerned not only with the question of peace and justice in relations between states but also, and above all, with the rights of nations which he had learned to distinguish from states. His ideal of a "society of states" was made dependent on three conditions: the growth of civilization and welfare among backward peoples; the redrawing of state frontiers in accordance with historical boundaries between nations; and the adoption of liberal institutions and representative governments by most countries. The first of these conditions reflected sympathy with the underdeveloped colonized peoples, characteristic of enlightened public opinion in Poland, while the second stressed (indirectly) Poland's right to separate statehood.

Prince Adam voiced these ideas not only as a Russian statesman. He remained faithful to them in later years, as the head of the Polish insurrectionary government in 1830–31 and as a leader of the Polish exiles in France. His case shows the continuity between Polish Enlightenment and Romantic thinking. The counterparts of Polish Enlightenment views on the law of nations are to be found in the epoch of Romantic nationalism, although of course with the reservation that there the predominant trend was towards the *revolutionary* brotherhood of peoples. The Enlightenment idea of an "association of nations" was to become a component of various Romantic programs for "making politics ethical." In August Cieszkowski's vision of God's kingdom on earth, the best-developed of these programs, it takes the form of the concept of "socialization of societies," that is, the joining together of free nations in "organic humanity," and the guarantee of their freedom and prosperity by supranational institutions: the Government of Humanity, the Universal Tribunal of Nations, and the General Council of Humanity.²²

3—

Stanislaw Staszic

Early Political Writings

We may now turn to the concepts of two of the greatest thinkers of the Polish Enlightenment, Stanislaw Staszic and Hugo Kollataj *. I should like first to issue a clear warning: this study does not deal with the entirety of their philosophical and political views but discusses them only insofar as is necessary for an understanding of the "national ideology" which appears explicitly or implicitly in their writings—that is their concept of the nation and the nation-building process, reflections on the history and current state of Poland, and a program for national renewal combined with a vision of the future of the nations of the world.

Staszic's first work, *Uwagi nad zyciem* Jana Zamoyskiego* (Comments on the life of Jan Zamoyski), 1787, initiated a great debate on "the form of the Commonwealth" which was taken up and continued by the Four Years Sejm. During the sessions of the Sejm, at the very beginning of 1790, Staszic published his next book, *Przestrogi dla Polski* (Warnings for Poland). These two books in a sense constitute an intellectual whole and can be discussed together.

Comments on the Life of Jan Zamoyski begins with a chapter on education, which in many respects is very similar to the analogous discussion in Adam Rzewuski's *Reflections*. This convergence probably results from their common source of inspiration in Rousseau's *Considerations*. Staszic

and Rzewuski agreed with Rousseau that education should "shape the souls of the citizens in a national pattern." "The newly born infant," wrote Rousseau, "upon first opening his eyes, must gaze upon the fatherland, and until his dying should behold nothing else."¹ From these guidelines, which did not particularly conform with the current views of Enlightenment universalism, Staszic drew far-reaching conclusions. In what was clearly a paraphrase of Rousseau, he wrote, "On opening its eyes for the first time, a child should see nothing beyond the fatherland, for which alone it will one day have the duty of closing them."² The basis of "moral instruction" should therefore be national history; not until later should the history of neighboring countries be taught, and "only finally, let them, and not necessarily all of them, read the history of distant times and states." The whole education of young people, not only in schools but also at home, should be strictly controlled and programmed by the government.³ Apart from education in patriotism through teaching the history of the native country, a great deal of stress should be placed on physical education and the martial arts; natural sciences should be taught in accordance with the needs of the country: a theoretical exposition—which was also incidentally, to assiduously avoid "the systematic spirit"⁴—was to be given only at the highest and most élite level of instruction; logic and metaphysics, like theology and mythology, should be completely removed from the school syllabus. Pupils should be allowed to go abroad only with the permission of the National Education Commission. Neither should adults "gad about in foreign countries."⁵ Too frequent travel had changed the physical appearance and dress of Poles and given them "a different soul and customs,"⁶ which had been a major cause of the downfall of Poland. Thus it was also necessary to introduce the principle that private journeys abroad were permissible only for those who had carried out civil or military service at home for several years. In the case of women, Staszic proposed even more draconian measures: "No woman shall

be permitted to go abroad to foreign countries until the education of her children is completed." ⁷

These arguments, like his support for the Confederation of Bar and his argument that strict morals were a precondition of republican virtue, won Staszic support among patriots of the "Sarmatian" and republican type. Staszic in fact deliberately sought this. In his *Warnings for Poland*, in a famous diatribe against the "lords," he condemned the magnates not only for breaking up seyms, bribing tribunals, and bringing foreign armies into the country, but also for the adoption of foreign ways. To satisfy the sentiments of the former Bar confederates, he reserved his harshest condemnation in this respect for the "Family," the Czartoryskis, accusing them of "despising national customs, deriding national manners, and calling a nobleman's honesty and simplicity Sarmatism."⁸ This was, incidentally, a typical "retrospective reproach" since the imputation of foreign ways was an attack on the style maintained by the "Family" years earlier, and not its current attitude to national customs and tradition.

In order to understand Staszic's viewpoint, one must constantly remember that he was writing with a particular audience in mind, namely the nobility, and especially the middling nobility, who were patriotic, enlightened, and attached to the republican tradition. To flatter them he wrote that in Europe "the knightly estate collapsed and despotism took the spoils," while only in Poland could "the last handful of free nobles" still be found.⁹ He also flattered them by attributing this to the "greater foresight" shown by the Polish nobility in the reign of Zygmunt August.¹⁰ He was in fact being far from sincere. It was in different words that this bourgeois ideologist expressed his real opinions, at the end of *Warnings for Poland*: "How far have other countries already gone! Elsewhere, despotism is already in decline; in Poland, there is still a noble oligarchy. Poland is still only in the fifteenth century while the whole of Europe is already approaching the end of the eighteenth century."¹¹ In the light of these words, the greater "foresight" of the sixteenth-

century Polish nobility proved a misfortune for Poland, an effective brake on normal development, an essential phase of which would have been the replacement of noble oligarchy by absolute monarchy.

The republican project for the reform of the Commonwealth which he outlined in his *Comments* should be judged similarly. In this project, the chief center of power was to be a "perpetual seym," made up of nobles and burghers, endowed not only with legislative but also executive power, and making decisions by a majority vote.¹² The monarchy was to remain elective, but in order to avoid the machinations of foreign courts and the bribery of deputies, the king was to be chosen by lottery from among the one-third of the voivodes designated as eligible by the Electoral Seym.¹³ This project would replace the "noble oligarchy" by an "orderly Commonwealth." This was not however the project which Staszic himself considered best. On the contrary, he thought that "today, enlightened despotism is the best government," and he appealed to his people in the following terms: "That your land be not divided; that you might remain in one company; that you might be not a distant province of a foreign country, but form a nation apart and a whole country; establish while yet you may absolute rule, absolute government."¹⁴ He doubted however whether the nobility would heed his advice and it was for this reason that he also put forward the alternative, republican reform program. But in so doing he also pointed out that this was an inferior and partial program, to be accepted only on the assumption that "in Polish minds there is more custom and would-be freedom than discernment and evident truth."¹⁵

It would be difficult to state it more clearly. And it is therefore not easy to understand those scholars who classify Staszic as an "Enlightenment republican."¹⁶

Staszic justified his position primarily on pragmatic grounds. He saw no sense in an appeal to the laws of nature, because "the laws of nature have already been devastated in all countries";¹⁷ whoever wished to survive must adapt himself to those harsh laws which "despotism has

established between nations." ¹⁸ A certain inexorable, indeed merciless, realism told Staszic not to expect morality of politicians. Reference to "violation of the law of nations" was for him of purely rhetorical significance; basically, "human communities have hitherto not formed laws among them," and therefore it was impossible to violate what had never existed. ¹⁹ Where there was no law there could be neither justice nor injustice, and force was the only judge. Instead of complaining about injustice, a nation should build up its armed forces: "Today, that nation commits an injustice which does not know how to fight." ²⁰

The common weakness of an oligarchy and an "orderly Republic" was slowness of action and openness of councils. ²¹ Therefore, "republics, and even more so oligarchies, cannot flourish or maintain themselves." ²² In politics it was impossible to ignore "the external connection among countries"; if a country wished to maintain its independence, citizens could have as much, and only as much, freedom as "the external connection among countries allows." ²³ "Today is the day of despotism," when the freedom of the nobility has become a dangerous anachronism: "The Turks have become the laughingstock of nations with their Koran, and the same applies to our nobility in its feudal anarchy." ²⁴

Two lines of argument should be distinguished in Staszic's writing: firstly, a demonstration that the matter of the freedom of citizens should be subordinated to the matter of the independence of the state, and secondly, a demonstration of the social superiority over noble oligarchies of countries that were ruled despotically. Let us examine these in turn.

On the first question, Staszic's argumentation coincides with the views which were clearly expressed by F. S. Jezierski, an associate of Kollataj's*. He wrote, "Whosoever says, 'I prefer liberty with anarchy to orderly subjection,' suffers a failure of reason, for a lover of anarchic liberty will lose both liberty itself and the name of Pole," while in orderly subjection, the nation will retain at least its name, language, and character, "for where there is a nation, there liberty may

return, but where the dissipation of the nation has ruined the nation—pray, how can there be there a resurrection of liberty? . . . In the first place, I love the name and existence in the world of a Pole, and after that, Polish liberty, and where the first exists not, I know not where the republicans will locate the second." ²⁵

Staszic puts it into similar words, but he actually goes further. Jezierski postulated the abandonment of "anarchic liberty," while Staszic proposed giving absolute priority to national independence over the liberty of citizens, even sensibly exercised. "External liberty," he wrote, "is a measure of inner liberty. For the country, political liberty comes first. The civil liberty of the citizen cannot be greater than the political liberty of the country allows."²⁶ This was of course entirely contrary to the views of the republicans, who saw in this argument only a "miserable defense of coercion."

On the second question, Staszic's arguments are complicated by an effort to win over to the reform party the masses of the nobility who were committed to the cause of republican liberty. In the foreword to *Warnings for Poland*, Staszic tried to create the impression that he had changed his views under the influence of the estate of the nobility. In his *Comments*, he had said that the road from "feudal anarchy" to an "orderly Republic" had to lead through despotism, but now he stopped short at a program for saving the fatherland by a "statute of republican order," without passing through the intermediate phase of absolute monarchy.²⁷ He was prepared to work together with the nobility provided that they would no longer consider themselves the whole nation, but only a part of it, and that the defense of liberty should not be the defense of estate privilege, but a program for spreading liberty throughout the nation.

There is good reason to doubt whether this meant that he had abandoned the diagnosis that currently "everything assists absolute rule, everything conspires against republics."²⁸ On the later pages of *Warnings for Poland*, Staszic after all claimed that "republics have become despised, and despotic

countries respected," and he illustrated this thesis by pointing to the acquiescence of European public opinion in the crimes committed by the absolutist states against the Polish Commonwealth.²⁹ Staszic's change of view was based solely on his growing realization that a program of absolute rule had no chance of implementation in Poland. He had come to terms with this, but he did not in the least change his mind either on the question of the superiority of absolute rule as a means of assuring the independence of a country, or on the question of the social superiority of absolute monarchies over countries ruled by "feudal anarchy."

Proof of the social superiority of "orderly despotisms" was in Staszic's eyes provided by the greater labor productivity of the peasant and townsman; this resulted from a better protection of hereditary property than under noble autocracy, and also from "placing all under the ways of oppression, which apply equally to all,"³⁰ thus affording greater equality before the law. Otherwise, the nobles had an undeniable advantage, and he was therefore not surprised that the greatest hatred in Europe was directed not against absolute monarchies, but against "feudal governments, that is, against the sovereignty of the nobility alone."³¹ As befitted a progressive bourgeois ideologist, he was no apologist for the *ancien régime*, but he criticized it from a completely different standpoint from that of the Polish nobility. For the starting point of his criticism was not political liberty, but the question of property, and he rightly demonstrated that "real property"—*ius utendi et abutendi*—did not exist in a system where private property could be confiscated or depleted by an absolute power.³² From this point of view, there was no difference between the absolutism of a king and the absolutism of the noble seym. Moreover, Staszic pertinently noted that in both "orderly despotisms" and noble oligarchies, only privileged property existed. From this perspective, the difference between Polish "feudal anarchy" and "orderly despotism" was merely relative. But despite this, it was a difference which testified in favor of abso-

lute monarchies as a better guarantee of the legal status of the person and property of peasants and townspeople.

We can now see why for Staszic "orderly despotism" was an intermediate stage between noble oligarchy and an "orderly Republic." In his view, the fundamental precondition for the latter was that the nobility should be deprived of absolute power over the nation—something that had in fact been accomplished by enlightened "despotism." If the nobility did not want despotism, but at the same time wanted to modernize and strengthen the state, it must itself give up its "absoluteness."³³ If the nobility did not want the towns to ally themselves against it with the king, then it must itself share political power with them. If it wished to save republican institutions, then it should ensure that the statutes of the republic and its government covered "not one estate alone, but the whole land and the whole nation."³⁴ Noble exclusiveness should be replaced by a property qualification, for in an "orderly Republic," "all property owners without exception have the right to decide laws."³⁵ It was not enough to admit to the Seym a handful of representatives of the towns in a consultative capacity; it was necessary for half of the fully empowered deputies in the Seym to represent the towns.³⁶ Political reform should be accompanied by changes in thinking and habits. In place of separate, divided estates, a uniform nation should appear, bound by strong ties. Only by "doing justice to those who tilled the land, making common cause with the towns," and establishing an hereditary monarchy could the Polish nobility exculpate themselves from the guilt of bringing about the partition of the country, and justify themselves in the eyes of the nation and of Europe. "Make one nation of young noblemen and young burghers!"³⁷ With these words, Staszic ended the appeal to the nobility which concluded his *Warnings for Poland*.

Staszic's diagnosis that the "absoluteness" of the nobility was the greatest evil accorded with the views of another bourgeois ideologist, Józef Pawlikowski, the author of *Mysli polityczne dla Polaków* (Political reflections for Poles), 1789,

and a future Jacobin and secretary to Kosciuszko. They differed in that Pawlikowski's political program introduced a strong royal power as a counterweight to noble absolutism. Staszic, on the other hand, although in his *Comments on the Life of Jan Zamoyski* he had also been inclined towards this idea came to the conclusion that in Poland the nobility remained the determining factor, and that one should therefore not offend them by stressing the need for strong royal power. This was undoubtedly a fundamental difference, but rather in choice of tactics than in basic views on the desirable direction for social change. We should not forget that on the question of the succession to the throne—which was most important for the republicans—the *Warnings for Poland* had laid down a decidedly "monarchical" program. While it is true that Staszic admitted that "a hereditary throne is but one step from the loss of liberty,"³⁸ he repeated the argument that even complete despotism was better than loss of political existence: "First the nation, and thereafter freedoms. First life, and thereafter comfort."³⁹ In my opinion, these words provide an additional reason for supposing that Staszic's appeals to the nobility concealed a certain mental reservation: first one should persuade the nobility to give up their estate "absolutism" and introduce a hereditary monarchy, while later it would be possible to change tack and enter into an alliance with the hereditary monarchy against the noble apologists for a too-dangerous liberty.

The bourgeois character of Staszic's program is very evident in his attitude toward the Jews.⁴⁰ In line with the antisemitic bourgeois tradition, Staszic treated the Jews as the "locusts" of Poland, protected by the nobility to the detriment of the towns and the whole economy of the country. He saw Jewish self-government as a harmful relic of feudalism, and proposed that the kahal, or assembly of elders, should be abolished, so that the Jewish population could be brought under the general legal system, municipal jurisdiction, and compulsory linguistic assimilation. But he agreed to treat Jews who obeyed the general law of the land and who carried

out their religious rituals and teaching in the Polish language, as Poles, on a par with other religious minorities in Poland.⁴¹

The concept of the nation in Staszic's political writing is used for the most part in a different sense from that found in the writings of the republican ideologists. In the republican tradition, the word "nation" denoted a collective sovereign, as opposed to the sovereignty of a monarch, and was thus a legal-political concept. It was in this same sense that A. W. Rzewuski used it when he wrote that in England "you have no nation, but there is a king and there is a ministry";⁴² and Staszic himself used it in the same sense when he stated that in contemporary Europe "there is nowhere a nation, only lords of nations."⁴³ However, Staszic more typically regarded the nation as a community created by a common history, judicial system and language, existing independently of any particular form of government. From a consistently republican standpoint, *ex definitione* there could be no nation in despotic countries (or, rather, a nation could only potentially exist in them), but Staszic believed that it was sometimes necessary, in order to save the existence of the nation, deliberately to renounce liberty in favor of despotism.

A commentary on this opinion is provided by a passage on nationality in volume 4 of the first edition of *The Works of Staszic*.⁴⁴ Here we can find a distinction drawn between "natural nationality" and "acquired nationality." The first category covered national language, national music, a national name and history, the appointment only of fellow-countrymen to positions in the government, courts and administration, and even "marriage exclusively among fellow-countrymen"; the second category covered national costume, national symbols, inherited territory, names of towns, villages, rivers, etc. He considered both types of nationality to be "inalienable," carrying the obligation of loyalty and defense. However he recommended that they should be distinguished from government, law, education and science, which—like reason and civilization—were the common property of all nations and therefore had to change with historical progress. One of the intentions

of his argument (although it must be admitted that this was not very precisely expressed) was undoubtedly to convince his fellow-countrymen that they should not confuse defense of their nationality with opposition to universal progress. On the other hand, this argument lent force to the view that there was no essential link between the maintenance of nationality and civil liberty.

In yet another sense, Staszic's concept of the nation could be termed a *social* understanding of national bonds as opposed to the legal-political idea of the sovereign nation. In this context the word "nation" is used as a synonym for the integration of the whole of society, in contradistinction to class exclusiveness. The development of this concept of the nation is contained in Staszic's philosophy of history.

Philosophy of History

Staszic's great historiosophical work, the didactic poem *Ród ludzki* (The human race) was an attempt to explain two injustices which had made a tremendous impression on him: social injustice, of which he had personal experience as a member of the burgher estate which was discriminated against in Poland; and injustice in international relations, which affected him as a Pole. ⁴⁵ Staszic prefaced the fourth canto of the poem with the note that he had written it in 1794, "mindful of the violence, and the many crimes and cruelties, practiced on the Polish nation."⁴⁶

In Staszic's view, "true history" was social history: the history of the original, unreflective community, of the division of men into oppressors and the oppressed, the struggle of various social forces, and of the overcoming of antagonisms in a general legal order which ensured both the rights of every individual in the nation and also the rights of nations. The historical process followed a dialectical schema: the destruction of the original harmony, a long period of disharmonious development, and the future restoration of

harmony—by now not the original and direct kind, but mediated by total social development. "The happiness of primitive societies" was in this concept an augury of yet greater happiness awaiting human beings in the future association of nations which was being prepared by the progress of universal reason; ⁴⁷ the loss of human rights was represented as the beginning of a process which would eventually lead to their restoration and permanent guarantee. The first words of the poem already spoke of this:

I will recount how man doth men enthrall
And how the human race its rights regains.⁴⁸

Staszic explains that historical development began with the impression of time in the mind of primitive man. This gave birth to a picture of the future, and, consequently, awareness of the need to be concerned about that future.⁴⁹ In turn, this awareness brought with it "the idea of holding," i.e., of "holding" property in land and other objects, having their exclusive disposition, and taking them away from other people. This "most useful discovery" was the source of all the progress of mankind and at the same time the source of all its misery. "The idea of holding" contained two elements: on the one hand the idea of property as the growing dominion of man over nature, an essential precondition for material progress, and on the other hand, the idea of "exclusiveness," or the constraint of the majority by the minority.

Thus from holding one road led to beneficial property
While a thousand byways led to exclusiveness.
From the increase of the first, from the destruction of the
second,
Hung the progress of man's happiness as a moral entity.⁵⁰

The further course of history represented the enslavement of the peoples by privileged estates ("autocrats"), eminently aided and abetted by priests ("men of superstition"). The origins of autocracy lay in the subjugation of farmers and herdsmen by warlike hunting tribes. The victorious hunters

turned into "boyar hordes" who entered into a conspiracy with the "men of superstition" in order to maintain their rule. The culmination of autocracy was the feudal system where coercion reigned, the majority of people were treated like animals, and "everything contravened age-old law." ⁵¹ This extreme denaturalization of man was however "a necessary chapter in the history of humankind," "an essential point in the progress of human societies." ⁵²

Feudal exclusiveness broke the nationwide bonds: "nations fell, and holders and warlords became the nation." ⁵³ It also destroyed property as a product of hard work and enterprise and replaced it with property based on coercion. Consequently, in writing about this epoch, Staszic deliberately avoided using the word "nation," substituting for it the words "privileged, exclusive, divisive estates." Neither did he use the word "property," preferring instead the terms "holder, to hold, holding." In place of the word "owner," he used "holder, autocrat." ⁵⁴

It was also highly characteristic of Staszic to state that other terms such as "liberty," "justice" and "law" should not be applied in their contemporary sense to the feudal epoch, as was done by historians of certain nations, who wished to hide the existence of feudal "exclusiveness." ⁵⁵ There can be no doubt that the author of the *Human Race* was thinking primarily of Polish writers who idealized the republican traditions of their country. His own view on Polish history, of which a foretaste was provided in the rough draft of this poem, is shockingly ruthless and totally unambiguous. After the last partition of the Commonwealth, Staszic no longer needed to appeal to the nobility and indulge its republican sentiments in an attempt to enlist its support. He could allow himself to say what he really thought, and to write, "From the death of the last Jagellonian to the Constitution of May 3, there is no national history, but there is the history of one estate, the history of the demented nobility, and of a few powerful families which were quarreling with each other and destroying one another." ⁵⁶

According to Staszic, in the noble Commonwealth "there is no commonwealth, or perhaps I may put it more clearly, no commonweal . . . there were no Poles in the society. For there was only the commonwealth of the nobility." Even the "true, age-old Polish costume" was at that time replaced by "Cossack-Tartar costume."⁵⁷ In the light of these arguments, it is difficult to defend the position of those scholars who attribute to Staszic, on the basis of his writing addressed to the gentry, authentic attachment to Polish republican institutions. His sharp contrast of "true Polish costume" with Sarmatian costume offers grounds for belief that his defense of Sarmatian costume and customs against the foreign customs of the magnates—so characteristic of his earlier political writings—was also primarily a tactical maneuver.

But let us return to the history of the world. The "spirit of the laws of nature" which watched over the human race—a secularized providence, a kind of Hegelian "guide of reason"—was at pains to undermine feudal "exclusiveness" and pave the way for further progress. It proved that the absolute rule of "autocrats" over peoples contained in itself the seeds of its own decay: in satisfying all the material needs of the privileged class, the people awakened "fanciful needs" in their oppressors, "tore from them their natural needs," and therefore weakened their spirits and debased their bodies.⁵⁸ Fear of these mollicoddled "boyars" abated, their authority was shaken, and this was accompanied by the appearance among the oppressed people of learned men, powerful spirits who fearlessly revealed the liberating truth. Monarchical power extended its hand to the people in their growing emancipation, and was thereby able to subjugate the "autocrats" who had been corrupted by luxury. "Autocracy," or the absolute power of feudal lords, was replaced by "absolute rule," or, in other words, absolute monarchy. This represented enormous social progress. Absolute monarchies codified and standardized the law, introduced modern systems of taxation and a standing army, modernized education by taking it from the hands of the "men of superstition," and extended their

protection to the peasants and the towns. But let us allow Staszic to speak for himself. In his words, the "spirit of absolute rule,"

... takes under its wing
Peasants freed from serfdom, turns towns into society,
Gives them freedom and exclusive right:
To constitute municipalities, elect to office,
To hold the sword of life and death in justice;
And finally creates the most numerous third estate.⁵⁹

Absolutism, however,

... carried within it
The seeds of its destruction.⁶⁰

In its struggle against the feudal lords and the "superstitions" of the clergy, absolutism spread enlightenment, aroused awareness of the rights of man, but the light of reason and awakened human dignity then turned against it. The peasant community, which had hitherto suffered in silence, began to "become active, and sometimes even thinking."⁶¹ In concession to enlightened opinion, monarchs began to call their subjects "a nation,"⁶² but this gave rise to the question: are nations created for rulers, or rulers for nations? Slavery, even if it is subject to some kind of "rule of law" does not cease to be slavery and cannot be reconciled with "universally disseminated reason." The inhabitants of an absolute monarchy see ever more clearly that "here too the human race is nothing."⁶³ The attempts by absolute rulers to maximize their own power lead to extremes in the rule of coercion in relations among nations, which is at variance with the rapprochement of nations being effected thanks to progress and enlightenment. "Absolute rulers" begin to realize that further intellectual progress will undermine their power, and they therefore try to hamper it by concluding an alliance with the "men of superstition" whose influence they had earlier tried to limit, and even with the "autocrats"

whose downfall they had themselves been largely instrumental in bringing about. But nothing can hold back inevitable progress. The era of "rebellion of the peoples" arrives. The "rebellions" are various, and both delight and sadden the enlightened sages: "If the bloody Robespierres sadden the earth, then the Franklins show the people truth and honor. The Washingtons provide an example in civic courage." ⁶⁴ This revolutionary period in the history of mankind is one of exceptional danger: "exclusiveness of spirit" still rages, and even more ferocious "monster popular leaders" appear.⁶⁵ "The spirit of the laws of nature" will however obviate the dangers of "popular rule"; absolute rule will turn not into democracy but into "absolute government," that is into constitutional monarchy, which combines strong power with justice and therefore recognition of the rights of man and respect for true property. The rule of law will also extend to relations among nations, and an "association of nations" will be brought about together with the ideal of perpetual peace.

Let us attempt to summarize.

Staszic's historiosophy is based on the concept that human progress follows a single, inevitable path of development. This is clearly an occidentalist concept, since its models for social development are Western countries, particularly France. Absolutism is here treated as an important and necessary developmental stage, and the absence of absolutism in Poland as an anomaly proving that the era of noble autocracy had continued there for at least three centuries longer than it should have done. These generalizations were plainly in conflict not only with the ideas of the republican party, but also with the ideology of those who drew up the Constitution of May 3. If we look ahead to the future, we might say that Staszic's view of Polish history anticipated the historiographical approach of the absolutist partitioning powers,⁶⁶ and was quite at variance with the views of the democrats of the Romantic era—not only Joachim Lelewel, who idealized noble popular rule, but also Edward Dem-

bowski, who condemned the nobility in the severest terms, while still considering Polish noble democracy to be a system superior to Western absolutism.

Staszic uses not political but social criteria in his classification and evaluation of systems of government. He is not interested in political liberty but in social emancipation, social justice. In his first draft of *The Human Race*, this was stated with a clarity that leaves no possible room for doubt. It is worth citing:

Liberty, O word steeped in folly! The greatest tyrants of the human race cried most often: Liberty.

The Greeks and Romans, who were most ardent in the cause of liberty, who wrote most and spoke most of liberty, these same Greeks and Romans were the greatest lawbreakers and predators of the human race. Millions more than their own number was the number of helots, of human slaves, of men brought to the level of cattle.

The English, who pride themselves on liberty, have enslaved millions of human beings, who must live and die miserably in cruelty and in labor to satisfy the insatiable souls of the merchants and magnates of the India Company, who, to maintain the spirit of exclusiveness, and at the same time slavery in trade, turn the world upside down, have destroyed India, and are pushing Europe from war to war.

The German nobility and the Polish nobility, who called liberty golden, have been exclusively autocratic, and have looked impassively on millions of people in their own countries without property, without land, without justice, without rights. . . .

O people! Beware of persisting in, of seeking after the word liberty, which is so delusive, so complaisant towards self-satisfaction, deceit, and hardened personalities—but act to perfect societies, to confer on them civil rights, to establish universal justice, equal for all—for that is civil liberty.⁶⁷

The contrasting of social emancipation with civil liberty has a tradition of its own in the history of European thought.

Staszic, the ideologist of the bourgeoisie, repudiated noble political liberty because he saw it merely as an instrument which in no way curtailed the "autocracy" of the nobility themselves. In later years, bourgeois political liberty was to be repudiated in its turn: the German "true socialists," the Russian populists, the West European and Russian anarchists, and also the "economist" vulgarizers of Marxism, reduced it to a mask and instrument of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Staszic, of course, could not have foreseen this but today's scholars should be aware of it and not enthuse too greatly over this bourgeois critique of noble republicanism. It is possible to conclude that Old Polish liberty was nothing more than an instrument of the class dictatorship of the nobility, although in that case there is no reason not to apply analogous arguments to bourgeois liberty. However if liberty is accorded a certain autonomous value, even though in particular historical situations yoked in the service of some class interest or another, but not reducible to them, then one must be able to discern this value both in liberal bourgeois liberty and in Polish noble liberty.

In order to avoid possible misunderstandings, it is necessary to state clearly that in Staszic's case he was a critic not only of noble republicanism, but also of the bourgeois variety. Polish experience led him to the conclusion that all political liberty is dangerous, since it paves the way for oligarchy and unending struggle between ambitious and influential individuals. It was for this reason that he stated explicitly, "An emperor, a king, a constitutional monarch—or in other words, I will put it plainly—an absolute ruler, is inseparable from the natural laws of the human race. And therefore, in the history of all nations, everywhere in human associations, even in great and united societies of nations, the rule of one man is essential, is finally indispensable." ⁶⁸

It is not surprising that Claude Backvis, an eminent expert on and fearless advocate of Polish libertarian noble traditions, did not have much sympathy for Staszic. He considered the author of *The Human Race* to be "the only bourgeois thinker

who really counted" in Poland, but he refused to number him among the friends of freedom. ⁶⁹ On the contrary, he attributed to him the political amorality which accepts *force majeure*, deification of the "nation state" (*l' état-nation*) and even a kind of "biological nationalism."⁷⁰

It is worth examining and countering these accusations, while at the same time indicating the reason why they were put forward.

The charge that he accepted the right of the stronger refers to Staszic's view that in relations among states force rather than impotent appeals to justice was what was significant. Still, one should remember that this was a conclusion reached in the context of Staszic's own epoch—the epoch of "absolute rulers"—and that he proposed an "association of nations" which would eliminate force from international relations. The charge of deification of the "nation-state" also collapses by the same token.

When he spoke of "biological nationalism," Backvis was almost certainly thinking of Staszic's view that "the exclusive autochthony of the tribe," including "marriage exclusively with fellow-countrymen," was an attribute of "natural nationality" which could not be violated without risking annihilation.⁷¹ Backvis' conclusion is marred by a certain ahistoricism and exaggeration. Other statements of Staszic's show fairly clearly that by "fellow-countrymen," he usually meant the whole population of the state and he was thus employing the "state" and not the "biological" concept of the nation. Nonetheless, it is true that the proposal of "marriage exclusively with fellow-countrymen," especially when linked with his proposal for the linguistic and cultural polonization of the whole population of the state, was an obvious tribute paid to nationalist xenophobia.

Staszic evidently shared the view that the nation was the sole source of "legislative power." For him this was a theoretical principle which obliged rulers to serve the nation, although he did not, as I have tried to show, draw the conclusion that it was necessary to make the nation a truly "sovereign nation."

One might say that the question of the nation was for Staszic not one of the participation of all Poles in establishing laws—for he made the reservation that this should be the right of "property owners" alone—nor more particularly in exercising power, but a question of the appearance of a bourgeois society which guaranteed liberty of person and inviolability of "true property" and was held together by strong statewide patriotism. While Polish statehood still existed, albeit within reduced frontiers, it was evident to Staszic that national feelings must overcome estate barriers and integrate all the people within the framework of the existing state structure. After the collapse of the state, it was no longer possible to think in this way. Many politicians and writers saw the third partition as the end of the Polish nation. Szczesny * Potocki, a member of the Targowica Confederation, drew from this the farthest-reaching logical conclusion: "I speak no longer of the future Poland and the Poles. The state and that name has disappeared, as have others throughout the history of the world. Each of the former Poles should chose for himself a fatherland. I am already and forever a Russian."⁷² Staszic, of course, rejected thoughts of this kind, although at the same time he also rejected a revolutionary struggle for independence.

The Post-Partition Writings

In the period of the Duchy of Warsaw, Staszic wrote a major treatise entitled, *O statystyce Polski* (On Polish statistics), 1807. Here he claimed that a series of beneficial changes had occurred in the Polish territories, beginning with the May 3 Constitution, but advanced further by the Prussian government and in part by Austria and Napoleonic France. In a considerable area of Polish lands, "nothing feudal" remained, "there are no magnates, there are only property owners," serfdom had been abolished, and while the peasantry was not yet possessed of "that degree of citizenship that obtains in France, it is now in that state that it had attained in France

before the revolution, and as is now in Austria, Bavaria, and Saxony." ⁷³ The Poles "need a king as quickly as possible"—a king with absolute power, a hero king. ⁷⁴

Staszic was very positive about Poland's links with France, even though he clearly considered the Duchy of Warsaw itself to be merely a transitory political creation, which would solve neither the Polish question nor the matter of securing French interests in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland, he wrote, had always played the role of bastion of Europe and without her revival, "Europe, including France, will never find permanent peace." ⁷⁵ A reconstituted Poland would be a conduit for French influence among the Slavs—"becoming enlightened herself through France, she would cast that light on those numerous peoples united by customs and language." ⁷⁶ In this way, civilizational and cultural progress would occur among the Slav peoples and this would prepare them, in line with the general trend of historical development, to enter into a general federation of the nations of Europe.

The reconstruction of the whole of Poland by France was however for Staszic only a desirable possibility, the fulfillment of which was in no way certain. He saw a stronger basis for hope in the fact that Poles already had in their own lands "a point for arming and gathering," and could therefore in the worst event ensure for themselves at least the status of Hungary—that is, political autonomy which would guarantee "nationality, their own language, national laws and offices." ⁷⁷

In these arguments a distinction is obviously being drawn between "complete political existence," that is, existence as a "nation state," and "nationality," which could also be ensured within the framework of a foreign state structure. This was almost certainly evidence of a transition from the "political" to the "ethno-linguistic" concept of the state. The irresolution with which Staszic uses the word "nation" in this new sense is exceedingly characteristic: he addresses "the Polish nation," but at the same time speaks of "the great nation of Slavs," with whom the Poles are apparently linked by uniform customs and even a common language. The con-

cept of Poland as a "political nation" was unambiguous and clearly defined, even though this nation was not composed only of Poles or indeed only of Slavs, but included various non-Slav elements (Lithuanians, a German-speaking bourgeoisie). His transition to an ethno-linguistic concept caused terminological confusion for in this context the similarity of the Slav peoples might have seemed more important than the differences that divided them.

After the Congress of Vienna, under the influence of a generalized belief in the sincerity of the polonophile sentiments of Alexander I, creator of the Kingdom of Poland, Staszic finally substantiated his idea of an association of the nations of Europe. He came to the conclusion that tribes—Romance, German, and Slav—took precedence over particular nations, and proclaimed the notion that united under the leadership of Russia, the Slavs would decide the future fate of Europe and the world. The setting up of the constitutional Kingdom of Poland persuaded him that Russia would unite the Slavs while respecting the political and cultural traditions of the particular branches of the tribe. "The nation of Slavs, the greatest nation in the world," he wrote in *Uwagi do Rodu Ludzkiego* (Notes on the human race), would begin a new era in the history of European civilization. "Finally, it will obliterate the stubborn, and on their ashes, nature will, through the Slavs, form an association of the nations of Europe." ⁷⁸

This idea was to compensate the Poles for the loss of state independence. On the question of the interrelation of Russian and Polish cultures, Staszic emphasized Polish "seniority," and expressed the hope that in the Russian Empire the Poles would play a role similar to that of the Greeks in the Roman Empire. He said of this to Kajetan Kozmian*:

What of it, that you anticipate the renewed assignment of Warsaw under the Russian sceptre? By virtue of its political and geographical location, this city is destined to be the third, or even perhaps the principal, capital of the great Slav tribe, united in one body under one powerful sceptre. Here the fate

of Western Europe will be decided. Western Europe permitted the partition of Poland, and so she must serve one more powerful; she neglected to find an ally in the Poles, and she will have them, incorporated in Slavdom, as lords. The die is already cast. Let us unite with Russia; we will take might from her, and let her take enlightenment from us.⁷⁹

And so nineteenth-century pro-Russian pan-Slavism—not the murky idea of a Slav "cultural reciprocity," but a *political* pan-Slav program—was born in Poland, and at that much earlier than in Russia itself.

Staszic's treatise, *Mysli o równowadze politycznej w Europie* (Reflections on the political balance in Europe), which was read at the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Learning in August of 1815, provided the manifesto for and justification of this pan-Slavism. He argued that the Slavs had a political right to unite the peoples of Europe under their hegemony, for it was they—both the Russians and the Poles—who had for centuries been the sole defense of Europe against the Asiatic hordes. Moreover, and more importantly, none but the Slavs had managed to perform this great task. The Gaulo-Latin tribe "everywhere wanders without a spirit of self-preservation or a spirit of order":⁸⁰ the Italians, crazed by the classical ideas of liberty and republicanism, had lost the principle of national unity which was personified in a hereditary monarchy; admittedly the French had maintained it for centuries, but at the end of the eighteenth century they had also destroyed it and were unable to recover it. The Teutonic tribe, overly inclined to "metaphysicizing" and sectarianism, had never achieved political unity; they had, it was true, put into practice the idea of association, but this was only an association of small kingdoms and principalities, not of peoples—an association which had consolidated particularism rather than building unity. The idea of unity would be put into practice by the Russians because they displayed a permanent and systematic attitude to the goal of strengthening their power, since there existed in Russia "unity of faith and throne,"⁸¹ and fi-

nally because thanks to her civilizational youth she retained a greater reserve of original strength and therefore would "release greater multitudes upon the world." ⁸² The initiative for uniting the Slavs under the leadership of Russia had come from the Poles, "the elder brothers of the Russians," as a result of the misery that had befallen their country and a realization that unlike the Germans, the Russians would understand that the Poles were "not capable of becoming their slaves, but were prepared to be their brothers." Staszic addressed the following appeal to the two nations: "Seek for natural bonds, the bonds of your blood, the bonds of a homogeneous generation, there where for ages nature herself has arranged them for us and for you."⁸³

In the last canto of *The Human Race*, written in the period of the Kingdom of Poland, Staszic presented a fairly detailed vision of the future association of nations.⁸⁴ Despite its declarations in favor of constitutional monarchy, it was a vision far removed from constitutional monarchism in the sense that liberalism conferred upon the term. It included no parliament, no opposed political parties. Instead of representation of various political viewpoints, Staszic envisaged representation of various social institutions, like the institution of the family (with natural authority vested in the father), religious institutions (no longer the religion of the "men of superstition," but the religion of reason), institutions dealing with defense, justice, agriculture, industry, trade, etc. The nations were to swear that "no people may be subject to another,"⁸⁵ although this was not meant to provide the basis for a loose federalism. On the contrary, the states in the associated nations were to be uniform, permitting the use of "indigenous languages" in local affairs but with one statewide language—probably Russian.⁸⁶ The autonomy of the individual nations was to be only conditional: for breaking the general peace there was to be a sanction of ten years of "custodial authority," and if the guilty nation repeated its misdemeanour, then it "loses its national existence and is broken down into smaller units."⁸⁷

The pro-Russian pan-Slav tendencies of *The Human Race* did not however obscure or force into the background the main story line of the poem: the account of the struggle of the oppressed with their oppressors and of the inevitable defeat of the latter. It was for this reason that most of the copies of the work were seized by the censor, and that the Grand Duke Constantine, according to Niemcewicz's memoirs, personally burnt his own copy in his fireplace. ⁸⁸

In the history of the idea of the nation in Polish thought, Staszic is undoubtedly a figure of primary importance. The problems of the whole of his epoch are reflected in his opinions—in their evolution and their contradictions. This proponent of the absolute priority of independence for the nation-state became, after the loss of Polish statehood, the Polish champion of drastic limitation of the sovereignty of all states in order to ensure the rights of nations—by now, not nation-states, but nations in the cultural-ethnic-linguistic sense. He enriched the legal-political concept of the nation as "human community whose members participate in determining laws."⁸⁹ By adding it to the social dimension he emphasized the necessity for nationwide integration through the abolition of estate barriers, and then moved on to stress "natural bonds, bonds of blood, bonds of an homogenous generation." He was a profound, but also extremely one-sided, critic of noble republicanism, an apologist for strong monarchical power, and in his views on Polish history he anticipated not Lelewel, but the Kraków school. He fought against the social rule of the nobility, against the tradition of the "nation of the nobility," but he turned in disgust from "popular rule," offering as an alternative to both the concept of a "nation of property-owners." In this concept, he was close to the other outstanding thinker of the Polish Enlightenment, Hugo Kollataj* (Kollontay), even though he differed from the latter in his dislike of parliamentarism and mistrust of political liberties.

4—

Hugo Kollataj ***The Sovereign Nation**

Kollataj used a term taken from the Italian Enlightenment thinker Gaetano Filangieri to describe the task that confronted Poland in the period of the Four Years Sejm: "the peaceful revolution."

This was a program for replacing "feudal government" with a "true republic," but drawing a careful distinction between a republic and "popular rule." Like Staszic, Kollataj was a determined opponent of the belief that "human liberty will be secured when the commonality enters government on an equal footing with the richest citizens." He demonstrated that beliefs of this kind "always led to confusion and coercion, started civil wars, and ended in autocracy."¹

In opposition to the singular alliance of the Old Noble republicans (S. Rzewuski) and Jacobin republicans (W. Turski), Kollataj proposed the introduction of a hereditary monarchy in Poland. To the arguments of Seweryn Rzewuski, who stated that it was better to give up monarchy altogether than make it hereditary, he replied by pointing to the example of the American Revolution, with a reminder that when the Americans had wanted to emphasize their oppression under English rule, they had compared their prerevolutionary position with that of Polish subjects. The Americans, he wrote, were like "a well-brought up young man, whose heart

had not yet been corrupted by bad example," while the Poles were in comparison "grown old in bad habits," and could not therefore blindly copy American models. ²

Despite this, Kollataj's* republicanism, unlike the republican program outlined in Staszic's *Warnings for Poland*, was authentic; not a product of tactical reasoning, but of deep-seated conviction. "Raison d'état" did not have for him absolute priority over political liberty. The attitude of these two thinkers to the figure of Jan Zamoyski symbolizes this difference. For the author of the *Comments on the Life of Jan Zamoyski*, the great chancellor was the personification of sound state thinking struggling against anarchy, while for Kollataj he was the "founder of entail" and the ideology of the magnates, to whose revenge "fell brave Zborowski, the sad first victim of the magnates." ³

Even this one stray remark indicates the basic divergence between Staszic and Kollataj in their judgments on the past of noble democracy. In their diagnosis of its current state, however, agreement is restored. "What is our country?" asked Kollataj, and replied, "It is not a monarchy, for that ended with the house of Jagiello. A king can be nothing without a nation. It is not a republic, for that is shown only every two years for six weeks. And so, pray, what is it? Behold, a paltry and inefficient machine, which cannot be driven forward by one man, and which all men do not wish to drive forward together, while one man can always stop it." ⁴

Reform of the Commonwealth required the introduction of a hereditary throne, but "to inherit a throne is quite different from inheriting a country"; ⁵ a Polish king would not be a monarch, since he would not be sovereign, and his power—the power of the highest supervision—would be "imparted and not sovereign power." ⁶ The majesty of hereditary monarchy was necessary in Poland because of the size of the country, but majesty was distinguishable from monarchism. "A king in a monarchy regards himself as the father of minors, for whose every need he must provide without their knowledge or effort. A king in a republic is as the father of grown children, with whom he should take common care for their good." ⁷

The highest authority in a commonwealth would be not the king but the Sejm. The idea that the Sejm. should be charged solely with establishing laws was mistaken; ⁸ the true sovereignty of the nation was brought about through active exercise of power, and therefore the Sejm, the representation of the people, should in fact be the government and exercise executive power. A Sejm that sat for a few weeks every two years was therefore not enough; even a Sejm in permanent readiness for session was not enough; a Sejm in permanent session was required. For republican liberty consisted not in liberty in the sphere of private life, in *liberty from* interference by authorities, but in liberty in the sphere of public life, in *active participation* in authority: "The freedom that we are promised by a lasting commonwealth and free government is not that false pleasure which can be found in repose and sloth, but honest rapture which brings relish for honor and work."⁹

These words are worth a little consideration. They show that Kollataj's* idea of liberty coincided with what Benjamin Constant was later to call "ancient liberty" and which he contrasted with "modern liberty" or the liberty of individuals in their private life, i.e., freedom "from" and not freedom "to." It was in fact the "negative freedom" that Constant regarded as most important from the point of view of liberalism, requiring defense not only from the sovereign authority of kings, but also from the democratic principle of the sovereignty of the nation, which he associated principally with Jacobin dictatorship. He showed that the sovereignty of the nation was a revival of "ancient liberty," while "modern liberty" was based not on participation in sovereignty but on limiting the scope of all sovereign power.¹⁰

In the light of these classic conceptual distinctions, Kollataj's notion proves to be democratic and not liberal in the historical nineteenth century sense of that term. It was still a noble democratic concept, since as we shall see, it ensured decisive, although no longer exclusive influence by the nobility on the sovereign representation of the nation. Despite this, however, the theory of the sovereignty of the nation was for-

mulated here as forcibly as in Jacobin doctrine. It sounded much less revolutionary than it did in France, for in Polish conditions it could be traced not only to a revolutionary interpretation of the laws of nature but also to national tradition. Even taking all this into consideration, one can still conclude that Kollataj's * idea of the sovereignty of the nation played on a more modest scale a role similar to the Jacobin idea: it was antifeudal, and rejected both the sovereignty of a monarch and the sovereignty of the noble estate by pointing out that (at least theoretically) the only source of legitimate authority was the whole nation; it accelerated the process of forming a modern nation by awakening active responsibility for the fate of the country.

The fate of Ignacy Potocki's reform projects, which were inspired by Kollataj*, provides eloquent testimony to the revolutionary flavor which the otherwise traditional concept of the sovereignty of the nation had begun to acquire in contemporary Poland through the substitution of the concept of "nation" for that of the "nation of the nobility." In the draft *Principles for the Reform of Government*, presented to the Sejm in December 1789, the conservative opposition everywhere crossed out the word "nation" and replaced it with the words "noble estate" or "commonwealth." This was repeated in September of the following year during the discussion of the sixth article of the cardinal laws. "Sovereignty" was left to the nobility alone and Kollataj's project for making the estate of burghers an equal party to government and creating in this way a new noble-bourgeois concept of the sovereign nation, therefore collapsed.¹¹

The most important difference between Kollataj's version of the idea of the sovereignty of the nation and the Jacobin version was that in the view of the author of the *Anonymous Letters* this idea could not become a tool in the hands of a political dictatorship. Kollataj* was aware of the danger of arbitrary decisions by the Sejm and took steps to prevent this which were similar to those proposed by other Polish republicans:¹² not through limitation of the sovereignty of

the representatives of the nation, but by the introduction within certain limits of the principle of unanimity. He was not in the least enthusiastic about "*pluralitas* in no way restricted, *pluralitas* undivided, without certain brakes in the government constitution." In *Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego* (Political law of the Polish nation) 1790, he wrote on this: "Those who introduced into Polish government the liberum veto had the very best intentions, and were mistaken only in that they placed such an important right in the hands of every member of the nobility." ¹³ The rectification of this error did not therefore consist in completely removing the veto, which would lead to "coercion of the smaller number of the greater," but in taking it away from individuals. The positive function of the liberum veto should be preserved by introducing a requirement for the passage of new legislation of unanimity from the two chambers of the Sejm—Urban and Rural—and the royal assent; and in the case of change in the cardinal laws of the state unanimity in the mandatory instructions from all the voivodeships.¹⁴

The proposal that laws should be sanctioned by the king reflected a certain evolution in Kollataj's* views—an evolution that consisted in abandoning the idea of a "governing Sejm" and an approach to the king's party in the conviction that a "limited monarchy" was currently a "necessary evil" for Poland. This evolution did not at all, as E. Rostworowski has rightly emphasized, lead Kollataj* to recognize the sovereign prerogatives of the crown.¹⁵ On this basic question, even at the time of his closest approach to monarchism, he remained firmly attached to the republican principle of the "sovereignty of the nation."

A Nation of Property-Owners

In order to afford protection from popular rule and at the same time undermine the privileges of the nobility, Kollataj supported an idea that had been made law in the May 3

Constitution: the idea of making political rights (as distinct from civil rights) dependent not on membership in a particular estate, but on a property qualification in the form of ownership of a specified amount of land. In this way, the impoverished nobility—that traditional tool in the hands of the magnates—would lose their political power, which would however be acquired by wealthier burghers, who by purchasing land would automatically acquire the rights of landowning nobleman. In this way, the "nation of the nobility" would be transformed into a "nation of property-owners." In his *O ustanowieniu i upadku konstytucji 3 maja 1791 roku* (On the establishment and fall of the May 3 Constitution) he assessed this reform as follows:

The liberty of the nobility and the townspeople had been made entirely similar. The difference between them restricted only to possession of land, not to person; for a nobleman who owned no land, although he had all freedoms assured, could yet not be active in the commonwealth, and the burgher who purchased land could not be refused noble status, and by this alone became active. ¹⁶

In reality, the May 3 Constitution did not fulfill the aims formulated in the first version of the burghers' memorandum presented to the king and Sejm in November 1789, after the Act for Uniting the Towns had been signed. This memorandum was edited, or perhaps even written, by Kollataj*, and demanded the admission of burghers, as burghers, to legislative and executive power by the creation of a separate urban chamber of the Sejm. Everything, however, suggests that, irrespective of the support which Kollataj gave to the political movement of the towns, the idea of limiting "active citizenship" to landowners adequately reflected his real views. It was a different matter that he also wished to link political rights with municipal landed property, as well as individual land ownership.

In justifying his standpoint, Kollataj* argued that only landowners were infallibly true patriots for only they were

indissolubly linked with their country and understood its interests. The poor, due to unenlightenment and material dependency, were always "slaves of the opinions of others"; ¹⁷ the owners of moveable property could take it with them and leave their fatherland in search of profit; only the landowner "in leaving his fatherland at once falls from the highest ranks of society."¹⁸

This was, as we can see, a typically bourgeois argument which is repeatedly to be found in justification for all kinds of property qualifications. The French constitution of 1791 also divided Frenchmen according to their property and treated only property owners as "active citizens." The singular characteristic of Kollataj's* view—that is, making political rights dependent not on property in general, but on landed property in particular—can be explained primarily in terms of the standpoint of the enlightened middling nobility, who were prepared to reduce their estate privileges in order to place their class interests on a firmer footing, breaking the solidarity of the "knightly class" in order to arrive at a compromise with the urban property owners and in this way more effectively defend their position as a landowning class. This same factor also explains the enormous popularity in Poland of the French Physiocrats, whose ideology proposed a capitalist modernization of the agrarian economy without dividing up landed estates and justified the predominant significance of landowning interests by the thesis that land was the sole source of wealth.¹⁹ Kollataj* was not a Physiocrat in his theory of wealth, for he claimed that labor was the sole key to all riches,²⁰ but he drew no practical conclusions from this. He did however completely accept the Physiocrats' proposal that all conditional, feudal land ownership should be turned into unconditional, bourgeois ownership. This made it possible to interpret noble overlordship of peasants' land as a noble property title deed, and peasant labor on estate land as an obligation resulting from a contract between a landowner and lessees. In this way, according to H. Grynswasser, "the problem of serfdom was to be interwoven with the question

of expropriation in an indissoluble bond, one serving the other as a pretext and legal title." ²¹

This is a harsh but fair generalization. It is impossible to interpret in any other way Kollataj's* statement that the future legislature should guarantee two things of fundamental importance: freedom of person to the peasant and land ownership to the nobleman.²² The price of abolishing serfdom was to be the formal deprivation of the peasantry of all title to land that they cultivated; feudal labor service could however be maintained on the basis of a bilateral contractual agreement between the noble landowner and the peasant lessee.²³ It was, of course, exactly this legal position which was introduced a few years later in the Duchy of Warsaw.

In his attempt to transform land ownership in a "weak" sense into land ownership in a "strong" sense, Kollataj* was highly consistent. He argued that land should belong exclusively to individual owners who possessed an unquestionable legal title, and that all royal estates and other state-owned or partly state-owned landed property should be abolished.²⁴ All forms of entail should also be abolished and the right of free sale of land and the division of inheritance be restored.²⁵ He based this on an unequivocal invocation of the class interests of landowners. All ambiguities in titles to property and all conditional forms of guaranteeing property rights were for him a dangerous pretext for ever greater reduction of the rights of property owners. But let us hear it in his own words:

The third epoch of the human revolution is approaching—the cruelest epoch, if we err in laying its foundations. For it would seem that human reason has already carried out two great designs: it has discovered the nature of fanaticism and has extirpated it almost entirely; and it has discovered the nature of despotism and is bestirring itself to bring it low. And today men are turning their attention to land ownership, in respect of which, whether coercion is employed or injudicious laws are prescribed, one may divine that it will sow the seeds of a terrible revolution which will swell mightily against

the landowners as those who rose from fanaticism and despotism. Millions are without landed property; millions recall its violent extortion. All that would be necessary is for the sleeping to be disturbed; all that would be necessary is for property rights to be diminished; even if it only hints that for the public good it is permissible to expropriate particular property, if this maxim is applied too widely it may first deal the cruelest blow to all political institutions in general, and thereafter to all men who possess extensive landed property." ²⁶

The Homogeneous Nation

The "political" concept of the nation—that is, the identification of the national community with the political community—was inherited by Polish Enlightenment thinkers from the old Commonwealth. With time however, they adopted from the French bourgeois Enlightenment ideologists the conviction that a modern nation should be homogeneous and that all forms of particularism—both regional particularism and separate legal and customary status for various groups of the population—were harmful relics of feudal times. This conviction came into conflict with the realities of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania—a state in which Lithuania as well as many other provinces retained considerable autonomy and separateness, and whose population constituted a veritable ethnic and linguistic mosaic. In this context, patriots of Kollataj's* kind saw modernization of the state as the fusion of diversity into uniformity.

Above all it was necessary to ensure unified legislation. The classic Enlightenment definition of a nation, formulated by the cofounder of the Jacobin party, the Abbé Sieyès, stated that a common, uniform legislation was a necessary condition of the existence of a nation: "Qu'est-ce que qu'une nation? un corp d'associés vivant sous une loi commune et représentés par la même législature."²⁷ Kollataj* was following the same argument when he proclaimed the necessity of standardizing

the law throughout the state. Little Poland, Great Poland, and Lithuania had admittedly, he argued, only one political law, but from the point of view of civil law and customs, "they are, I might say, in a way separate nations."²⁸ He recommended caution in abolishing these differences and made the reservation that it must be effected "with the free consent of all," but he formulated the aim clearly and appealed to his fellow countrymen to bring it about in practice: "O nation! If merciful Providence permits you to stand on the threshold of true liberty . . . be bold to write one code for all men and one legal procedure for all provinces."²⁹

The May 3 Constitution to a considerable extent implemented this proposal. It abandoned the use of the term "the two nations" (Poland-Lithuania), introducing instead the concept of one nation. Stanislaw August became king "by God's grace and the will of the Nation," the army was to take an oath of loyalty to the nation, the marshals of the Crown and of Lithuania were made "national officials." De facto the separateness of Lithuania was abolished even though this was never expressly stated—the text of the constitutional statute speaks of "the unity of the Polish nation," of "the Polish countries," "the common fatherland," etc.³⁰

Together with legal and administrative unification, the French Jacobins put forward and implemented a policy of consistent linguistic unification. In this respect, the situation in prerevolutionary France resembled that in the multiethnic Polish state: the majority of the population spoke not French, but other languages like Provençale, Alsace German, Flemish, Breton, Italian, Corsican, or Basque. From the Jacobin point of view, the position of France could perhaps have been regarded as worse, for the non-French languages had a longer and richer literary tradition than the non-Polish languages of the Commonwealth, and were moreover also used by the ruling class, whereas the nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian state had from the seventeenth century been subject to linguistic polonization and "Sarmatian" cultural homogenization. Despite this, revolutionary and Na-

poleonic France attained amazingly swift and unexpectedly lasting success in the linguistic homogenization of the nation-state. The great Gallicization campaign was begun by the Jacobins under the banner of the counterrevolutionary struggle and was launched by the Deputy Barère in the following words:

"Federalism and supersitition speak Breton; emigrés and hatred for the republic speak German; the counterrevolution speaks Italian; fanaticism speaks Basque. Let us destroy these dangerous tools of error." ³¹

Kollataj* expressed similar sentiments. Proposing that Polish should be introduced as the official language of the judiciary and official institutions in Lithuania, he used the following arguments:

Let justice speak in one national tongue to the nation. . . . The native language, perfected, used in education, and accepted for all the mainsprings of government, determines the character of the nation much more than does dress, and incomparably binds particular provinces together. And only that country can truly be called a nation which understands one language and whose language suffices for education, law, and government.³²

In *The Political Law of the Polish Nation*, these ideas were expressed even more forcibly, with a quite Jacobin trenchancy:

Since one language is the visible proof of the unity of a nation, therefore the Polish language will be general for all provinces which comprise the Commonwealth. Henceforth, it will not be permitted to use any other language but only Polish in the proclamation of law and in its execution, to the extent that not only the law but even all sentences [*decreta*], official transactions and summonses shall be written only in the Polish language. Even in schools, all teaching should be conducted in this language, excepting for seminaries, which require the language appropriate to ecclesiastical rites.³³

Kollataj's * proposals concerning the Jews represented an application of these principles. He respected the rights of the Jews as a religious minority, but was categorically opposed to their legal autonomy, which made the Jewish population "in a sense a privileged estate with separate court and government." He therefore proposed the abolition of the kahals; decrees of the Jewish rabbinical courts and also all transactions and contracts were to be written in Polish on pain of invalidity; Jewish civil cases were to be dealt with by the ordinary Polish judiciary; even the rabbis were to be familiar with Polish, Latin, arithmetic, logic, and natural law, and provide evidence of this knowledge in the form of certificates from Polish local schools. To this program was added the compulsory acculturation of the mass of the Jewish population: "All those Jews permanently or temporarily settled in the states of the Commonwealth, without exception, are to shave their beards, cease to wear Jewish robes, and wear those that are used by Christians in the states of the Commonwealth, the supervision of which we entrust to the viovodeship commissions, in the normal term for law, one year from promulgation."³⁴

The French Jacobins set forth the same views on the Jewish question. In 1791 they demanded that the Alsatian Jews cease to be "a nation within a nation," to adopt French dresses and customs, and subordinate all their interests and feelings to the highest loyalty for the French citizen—the loyalty to France. One of the members of the Jacobin club in Strasbourg wanted even to accelerate the assimilation of the Jews through forcing them to marry Christians.³⁵

In relation to the Ukrainians, Kollataj* showed greater moderation.³⁶ He attributed the carnage carried out by the Cossack Haidamak rebels to the "unenlightenment of the Ruthenian people," and to foreign (Russian) influence on the Orthodox priests, and therefore recommended the founding of a university in the Ukraine, taking particular pains to enlighten the priesthood in an Orthodox church that would in Poland be placed under the authority of a "national synod."

Realistically, he considered that a union of the Roman Catholic and Kiev Orthodox churches could only have been effected while Kiev was in Polish hands and he regretted the failure to implement the Treaty of Hadiach. It is therefore possible to conclude that he favored a careful and moderate program, advocating a wider influence of Polish culture but not direct religious and linguistic polonization. The benign and tenderhearted Kosciuszko went much further: he suggested abolishing the separate Ruthenian calendar and the introduction of the Polish language for Orthodox church services. He imagined that this would be the mildest way to free the Ruthenians from fanaticism and ignorance: "In time," he wrote, "the Polish spirit will enter into them."³⁷

One typical characteristic of Jacobin nationalism was the significance attached to schools and the army as two powerful instruments for uniting and educating the nation. These ideas were expressed in the slogans, "the nation in state schools" and "the nation in arms."³⁸ The first of these ideas broke with the concept of voluntary and private education, proposing that a unified, centralized, compulsory (at least to some extent), and state-regulated educational system should be set up which would be able to educate young people in a spirit of nationwide patriotism. The second idea replaced the mercenary soldier with the citizen soldier, who treated military service as a sacred duty to the fatherland, adored the national flag, marches, parades, and songs, and elevated the rhetoric of orders and the whole patriotic military ritual. It has rightly been noted that in this respect the Jacobins were the immediate predecessors of the militarism of Napoleonic France.³⁹

On these questions too, one may speak, albeit with certain reservations, of points in common between the Jacobin ideology and that of Kollataj*. As one of those most actively engaged in the work of the Commission for National Education, he was after all the cofounder of the first state system of education in Europe: a unified and centrally directed system which served to educate enlightened patriots, even if it was

not quite as universal and centralized as the Jacobin ideal required. On military matters, Kollataj * lacked the social radicalism of the Jacobins, for he did not propose that the common people should be called upon to defend their fatherland. He did however share the Jacobins' conviction that a republican army, inspired by conscious, nationwide patriotism, had the edge over the armies of absolutist states; he demanded that military schools should come under the authority of the Commission for National Education, and, on the other hand, that the whole educational system should be permeated with the spirit of military subordination.⁴⁰ Finally, unlike Staszic, who considered a permanent standing army to be a modern army, he expressed faith in "the nation in arms," advising the revival of voivodeship military displays and the setting up of parish drill musters.⁴¹

In Carlton J. Hayes' typology of nationalism, published several decades ago, "Jacobin nationalism" was distinguished as a separate type.⁴² As I have tried to demonstrate, Kollataj's* concept of the nation, especially on matters of the legislature and language, could justifiably be described as typologically similar to the Jacobin concept. The word "Jacobin" in fact of course only suggests the genesis of the concept, for its basic elements were taken over by Imperial France and became a permanent part of French thought on the nation. An understanding of the nation as a political community, the conditions for which are administrative centralization, together with uniformity of laws and language, has become known as the "French concept of the nation." It was this concept—intolerant of all aspirations to territorial or cultural autonomy—that motivated the 1849 revolutionaries in Hungary who attempted to impose it upon the non-Magyar nationalities of the kingdom.

If we look more closely at this concept, we can see that what distinguished it from the ethno-linguistic concept of the nation was not an underestimation of the significance of a national language but the fact that it was a *political* concept in which a national language played the role of an *instrument of unity*

which was to be applied in all areas of state life, while in ethnolinguistic concepts it was an object of adoration as an expression of the *unique individuality* of the nation. This is why there is no trace with Kollataj * or the Jacobins of that mystique accorded language by Fichte and the Romantics. And finally, the relation between language and the state is different: Kollataj's* concept (notwithstanding Kohn's superficial generalizations) expressed the viewpoint of the nation-state, which wished to preserve its political unity and strengthen it through continuing to impose one state language on its population, while the ethnolinguistic concept originated among stateless nations, which took linguistic community as the starting point and wished to build up their political institutions (the idea of separate statehood did not appear immediately or everywhere) on the basis of linguistic criteria.

The Nation of the People

The greatest differences of opinion in the literature on the subject concern Kollataj's attitude to the role of the lower classes of society—or, more precisely, the peasantry, the urban plebeians and the impoverished nobility—in the nation-building process. In the *Anonymous Letters* and *The Political Law of the Polish Nation*, Kollataj appears as a thinker decidedly opposed to "popular rule," proposing the abolition of serfdom without a land settlement, arguing that the peasants as well as the urban poor and the impoverished nobility needed only civil rights and not the rights of "active citizens." Some scholars however attempt to attribute to Kollataj a greater radicalism, pointing to the fact that among his followers—known as "Kollataj's Smithy"—there were people with highly radical ideas. The crowning argument in favor of an interpretation of this kind is the figure of the "Vulcan of the Thunders of the Smithy," Father F. S. Jezierski, who has been quoted above. His famous statement on the "commonality" is frequently cited:

The greater part of those who are poor and industrious are called the commonality; in France, among the French, the commonality is the third estate, but to my mind the commonality should be called the first estate of the nation, or, speaking more plainly, the nation entire. The commonality makes up the riches and power of the state, and the commonality preserves the character of the nation. In all Europe, throughout all nations, the nobility is similar. . . . But the commonality differentiates nations, maintains the native character of the native language, preserves customs and keeps to an unvarying style of life.⁴³

This statement indubitably deserves a great deal of attention. Formulations that refer to the commonality as "the nation entire" bring to mind the revolutionary concepts of the democrats of the Romantic era, and in particular the ideas of Edward Dembowski, who by identifying the nation with the common people placed the nobility outside the bounds of the national community. But in my opinion these associations lead down the wrong path. First, even scholars who place maximum emphasis on Jezierski's radicalism admit that he did not draw "far-reaching political conclusions" from this statement,⁴⁴ not even a project for agrarian reform, much less a revolution. Second, other pronouncements of Canon Jezierski's indicate that he contrasted the "nation of the commonality" with the "nation of the nobility" from a position that might be described as left-wing national solidarity—that is, not with the intention of excluding the nobility from the nation, or indicating that there were "two nations" in Poland, but with the intention of combating estate-exclusiveness in the name of "national wholeness," which would finally make of the Poles "one people separate from others."⁴⁵ This solidaristic tendency appeared also in his fine statement that love of country "contains something splendidly universal, since it irradiates for the good of the whole nation; whosoever loves his country loves in that country both friends and enemies together."⁴⁶ Thirdly, there is a note of conservatism in his

argument that the commonality preserves the national character: a contrast of the permanency of national customs with foreign innovations and the caprices of fashion. And fourthly and finally, interpretations that attribute extreme social radicalism to Jezierski do not explain how he could reconcile this with his argument that "the noble estate is the head, the urban estate is the breast and stomach, while the estimate of the commonality is as the hands and feet." ⁴⁷

Jezierski's novel, *Rzepicha, matka królów* (Rzepicha, the mother of kings)⁴⁸ provides some evidence that his views were radical. In *Rzepicha*, Jezierski argued—and here he was in agreement with Kollataj*—that the original inhabitants of Poland were the Sarmatian folk, whose happy life in a state of nature was interrupted by an invasion of Slovaks, or Slavs, from Pannonia. In the light of this theory (quite contradictory to later concepts which attributed generic Slavness to the conquered people), it was demonstrated that the rule of the descendants of the Slavs, or in other words the nobility, was based on usurpation and that there were reasons in history as well as natural law for reclaiming the rights of the enslaved people.⁴⁹ However, one should not overmagnify the radicalism of this. His theory on the origins of the nobility served Jezierski as a battle cry in his attack on the feudal system of estates but was not used against Kollataj's* concept of a nation of property owners: the differences between rich and poor, like the differences between the foolish and the wise, were regarded as natural and immutable by the author of *Rzepicha*. Moreover, since he himself came from the impoverished nobility of Podlsie, he included among the commonality the landless country gentry whom he in no way idealized. His excellent satire entitled *Jarosza Kutasinskiego* herbu Deborog*, szlachcica lukowskiego*, uwagi nad stanem nieszlacheckim w Polsce* (Comments by Jarosz Kutasinski*, of the Deborog coat of arms, nobleman of Luków, on the non-noble estate in Poland), 1790, leaves no doubt that for Jezierski the most important differences between men were not formal differences of estate membership, nor more par-

ticularly differences in origin between "Slovaks" and "Sarmatians," but those differences which—to modernize the terminology—could be called class differences. The hero of this work describes his father as follows:

My father, being from his nativity a human being, by accident of birth and by general reputation a nobleman, by property a farmer, and by straightened circumstances a miller, shoemaker, tailor and cooper, was from necessity however a peasant tied to the vice-regal estate by *corvée*, and if he hunted wolves for the amusement of a judge, he performed the services of a wolfhound.⁵⁰

Contrary to appearances, the social radicalism of this satire is no further-reaching than Kollataj's*. For these are basically jokes at the expense of the ideology of noble equality, which persuaded the Kutasinskis* of this world that their social status was equal to that of the great landowners. Jezierski did not so much criticize the occurrence of class divisions within the gentry as he did their stubborn claim that none existed, and the naivete of the impoverished nobility in believing this to be the case. This was entirely in accord with Kollataj's proposal that real and not fictitious social status should be taken into account, and therefore he demanded that men like Kutasinski*, who were economically dependent on rich landowners and differed from the peasantry only in their possession of a coat of arms, should not enjoy active rights of citizenship.

Jezierski did not live to see the Kosciuszko insurrection, during which the commonality—both the impoverished nobility and the urban poor—played such an important role. The patriotic attitude of the commonality was instrumental in radicalizing the views of Kollataj's Smithy and of Kollataj* himself. "The literary figures of the Smithy joined in the streets with the common people of Warsaw."⁵¹ The "Polish Jacobins," who considered Kollataj to be their leader, built gallows in the streets for traitors. Under the leadership of their shoemaker-commandant, Jan Kilinski*, the insurrection-

ary populace of Warsaw demonstrated the truth of the claim that the commonality was "the first estate of the nation." Numerous insurrectionary publications appealed to the revolutionary brotherhood of the common man; they were also addressed to the Russian and Prussian soldiers, invoking the Kantian idea of perpetual peace and proposing that a general European congress be summoned to impose a fair settlement of relations among nations.⁵² In this revolutionary atmosphere, an outstanding ideological leader was called for. Public opinion of both the left and the right accorded this role to Kollataj*, dubbing him, with varying intentions, "the Polish Robespierre."

Kollataj himself, as we know, did not follow in Robespierre's footsteps, and firmly repudiated Jacobin mob law; in later years he even tried to deny that Jacobinism had existed in Poland at all. From the point of view of this study, it is a matter of secondary importance to establish his real role in the events of 1794. As a born politician, he was motivated not only by ideas but also by pragmatic considerations, and it is therefore understandable that before the passing of the May 3 Constitution he was drawing nearer to the King, while in the year of the insurrection he made more or less discreet use of the support extended to him by the most radical elements. He undoubtedly at that stage moved to the left but there is nothing to indicate that he changed his fundamental beliefs.

One of the most important documents of the final period of the insurrection is the statute drawn up by Kollataj for the Supreme National Council (October 20, 1794) on transferring land in "perpetual hereditary ownership" to peasant participants in the insurrection. The wording of the title grant ran as follows:

"Citizen! The Supreme Council has awarded to you a part of that land which as a whole you have defended, and thereby, in binding you to your country as a landowner, it wishes that you should ever be mindful of your duty to defend the freedom and liberties of this Commonwealth in which you will

possess landed property." ⁵³ According to B. Lesnodorski*, "this laconic wording contained all the main political and economic ideas of the Enlightenment: a fatherland of a free people, bourgeois property ownership, a republican state."⁵⁴ As for Kollataj* himself, this was "the crowning expression of his aspirations on the peasant question."⁵⁵

We may note the absence in Lesnodorski's* list of the main ideas of the Polish Enlightenment of the concept of "the nation of the commonality," "the nation of the common people": this is warranted since it had not been one of the "main" ideas of political thought. A student of the concept of the nation in Polish intellectual history should however note that the idea of the commonality as "the nation entire" did at least raise its head at this time, even if it was not taken to its logical conclusions—and in the circle closest to Kollataj at that; moreover, immediately before the final dissolution of the Polish state, it began to take on real shape in the revolutionary and patriotic manifestations of the common people of Warsaw and Wilno.

Post-Partition Writings

After the defeat of the insurrection, Kollataj was imprisoned by the Austrians in the Olomouc fortress as a "dangerous revolutionary" (1794–1802). He made use of his enforced isolation for philosophical and academic work. This resulted in the two studies which form the core of his philosophical writings: *Porządek* fizyczno-moralny* (The physical and moral order), 1810, which expounds systematically Kollataj's* philosophy on man, and *Rozbiór krytyczny zasad historii o początkach* rodu ludzkiego* (Critical analysis of the principles of history on the origins of the human race), published posthumously. But unlike Staszic's *The Human Race*, neither of these works makes much contribution to the theme of the present study. The *Physical and Moral Order*, inspired by the ideas of the Physiocrats, speaks not of nations

but of man in general, of the connection between the "moral rights of man" and his "physical rights." The *Critical Analysis* deals with the problems of the destruction of the original unchanging physical and moral order, and therefore the destruction of the harmonious state of nature and the beginning of the historical process. Kollataj * explained this in terms of an external catastrophe, postulating a flood, and in this context also introduced the problem of the genesis of nations. In his *Concepts for the Study of the Physical and Moral Order* we find that the catastrophe of a flood broke up the "primordial community," divided people, and initiated separate and long-isolated lines of development of various anthropological types ("figures") languages, inclinations and customs.⁵⁶ As a result of their differing conditions for civilizational development, these divided parts of the human race proceeded at an uneven pace, further underlining their differences. It was therefore not surprising that when people of different nations came into contact with each other they did not recognize their brothers, but fought with one another, seized each other's property, and conquered one another. It was only after long centuries of the painful, disharmonious historical process that the idea of common humanity began to come to the fore, the idea that "the separate nations, with all their superficial differences, are the children of the primordial community from which they were accidentally driven out."⁵⁷ This was for Kollataj, as for Staszic, grounds for hope that the time was approaching when the moral order would reign in political relations.

During his time in the Olomouc fortress, Kollataj also worked out a detailed eleven-point program for anthropological studies, which he set out in his letter to J. Maj on July 15, 1802, and which was published in 1810 in the *Pamiętnik* Warszawski* (Warsaw diary). Here he formulated an appeal that a "thorough work on the customs, habits, and rituals of the Polish nation" should be written, additionally suggesting (a thesis that had been previously voiced by F. S. Jezierski) that it was the people, "the commonality," that best distin-

guished the nation and best preserved the original national customs and rites.

The letter to J. Maj was published in the *Warsaw Diary* at the request of the author himself, for he wished to indicate "what should first be undertaken before we can know what to include in our national history." ⁵⁸ This was an expression of Kollataj's* desire to participate in the history of Poland which the Society of the Friends of Learning proposed to compile. ⁵⁹ This is symptomatic and significant: a leading political figure of the period of the Great Sejm and Kosciuszko insurrection wanted to join in a project initiated by men who, since they considered the fall of Poland irreversible, had concentrated on researching and conserving "national mementoes" in order to preserve the national identity of the Poles at least in the nonpolitical sphere. ⁶⁰ This activity, motivated by awareness of the danger that the nation might cease to exist, was being undertaken by men of the Enlightenment but broke with the classic Enlightenment concept of the nation-state, paving the way for an understanding of the nation which would permit hope that the nation could survive in the absence of statehood. It was understandable that attention was directed primarily at preserving historical traditions and the national language. Julian Niemcewicz announced at the Society of the Friends of Learning that "it is language that makes the nation, or, rather, makes one nation separate from another," ⁶¹ and the ex-Jacobin, Samuel Bogumil Linde, compiled his monumental dictionary of the Polish language. Kollataj's program for anthropological research was moving in the same direction, for it was treated as a kind of preliminary study for Polish history and covered research into Polish dialects and argots; at the same time he introduced a certain ethnographic perspective, combined with a positive evaluation of folk culture. In this way, the leading exponent of the political thought of the Polish Enlightenment became one of the precursors of the folk cult that was so characteristic of the pre-Romantic, Slavophile movements in the period of the Kingdom of Po-

land and was later taken over by the ideologists of Polish Romanticism.

The Society of the Friends of Learning, of which Staszic was such an active member, did not trust Kollataj *, and at heart Kollataj himself would not have felt at home in the apolitical sphere of working to preserve stateless nationality. The creation of the Duchy of Warsaw awoke in him new political hopes. These were voiced in his book, *Uwagi nad terazniejszym* polozeniem* tej czesci* ziemi polskiej, która od pokoju tylzyckiego* zaczeto* zwac* Ksiestwem* Warszawskim* (Comments on the present position of that part of the Polish lands which from the Peace of Tilsit has been called the Duchy of Warsaw), which was written in consultation with the former Jacobins and published first in Leipzig in March 1809.⁶² This work, with its motto "Nil desperandum," is not only Kollataj's* last major political work, but also his last word on the national question.

In comparison with Kollataj's prepartition writings, the most important innovation introduced here is his belief that the reconstruction of Poland was an attainable goal only if basic changes were to occur in the whole balance of power in Europe, and also at the price of conscious surrender of total sovereignty. The eighteenth century saw Russian influence increasing in Europe: Russia saw herself as the protector of the Orthodox peoples against the Turks; she conquered Poland; and she became the guarantor of the disintegrated Holy Roman Empire, coming to terms with Austria and Prussia on the distribution of the future booty.⁶³ The French Revolution put an end to this trend. It had transformed the French into "a people quite new," had given rise to implacable hatred in neighboring countries, and had drawn France into a struggle for hegemony in Europe.⁶⁴ Napoleon, "the new Hercules," had resurrected the Western Empire, had introduced there uniform laws, and had restored respect for the law of nations by bringing low formidable great powers, offering justice to the weak and raising the fallen.⁶⁵ The

Napoleonic Empire was a system of separate states under the protection of France. The eastern bastion of that empire had to be a strong and powerful state "which would stretch from the Baltic to the Carpathians and to the Black Sea, and from the right bank of the Oder to the banks of the Dnieper and Dvina." ⁶⁶ Either Prussia or the Duchy of Warsaw could have formed the nucleus of a state of this kind, but Prussia's well-known perfidy made it possible to conclude that Napoleon would not entrust her with such great power; a reconstructed Poland would however have an interest in "being eternally allied with the French Empire."⁶⁷ An additional argument in favor of this line of reasoning was, in Kollataj's* view, provided by the fact that the small Duchy of Warsaw had been granted by Napoleon a constitution which "in the new political order is the due only of a great power."⁶⁸

Unlike Staszic, Kollataj* did not believe in a future unification of the Slavs. He stressed differences in language and character among the various branches of the Slavs, arguing in particular that the Ukrainians differed more greatly from "the true Muscovites" than did Spaniards from Italians.⁶⁹ In his view, a frontier on the Dnieper and Dvina was the traditional boundary dividing East from West. This allowed him to believe that Russia would be content with dominion in the East and would accept the frontier of the Western Empire designated by France.⁷⁰

Kollataj's greater stress on the need for homogeneity in the nation was another new aspect of his views. Admittedly, he emphasized the need to preserve national character, but at the same time he proposed that this could not entail toleration for particularisms. He was quite enthusiastic about the legal and administrative homogeneity of the Napoleonic Empire and proposed total linguistic homogenization within the ambit of the particular component states. He pondered the reasons why Napoleon had not at once resurrected Poland and concluded that it would have been impossible to unify such a large state immediately: in his view, Napoleon had decided to restore Poland gradually, by adding consecutive

parts to the Duchy with the "perfect constitution," for this method would aid the reeducation of the Poles in the spirit of centralism. As a result of this gradual pattern, he claimed, "every part of those lands which will at some time join with the Duchy of Warsaw will no longer be divided into provinces, into voivodeships, but into departments which will immediately adopt the same organizations; . . . the spiritual authority of the bishops will be associated with department boundaries, . . . civil, criminal and commercial law will be one and the same for all, through the acceptance of the Code Napoléon. . . . None will henceforth be a Lithuanian, or Volhynian, or a Podolian, or a Kievan, a Ruthene, and so on, but all will be Poles." ⁷¹

Kollataj* refrained from any breath of criticism in his own particular explanation of the French Emperor's intentions. He enthused about his role as the "new law-giver" who had abolished feudalism in Europe while retaining nobility and had saved Catholicism as a religion essential for the masses, while at the same time preventing the harmful effects of clericalism;⁷² he expected that through "the creation of an immense Commonwealth of the Western Empire," the dreams of the Abbot of St. Pierre, based on the justice of perpetual peace, would be fulfilled;⁷³ he considered the constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw to be "in every respect excellent," incomparably better than the May 3 Constitution; he even defended the Emperor's most unpopular decisions, like making the Duchy bear the costs of maintaining a 30,000 strong French army, and the distribution of Polish lands to French generals.

This was obviously a political offer extended to "the new Hercules." It is typical that Napoleon did not accept it, preferring to find support in Poland among the aristocracy who deeply mistrusted Kollataj*.

5—

A Few Conclusions

It has not been the aim of this study to offer an all-embracing presentation of the idea of the nation in the thinking of all representatives of the Polish Enlightenment. I have not been concerned to give a complete picture, for that would require a much bigger book, but to attempt to present the problems in a way that will be useful in understanding the further development of the idea of the nation in post-partition Polish thinking. It would however seem that, despite my deliberate selectiveness, the material provides grounds for drawing a few conclusions to which I shall be able to return later in the book.

First, notwithstanding Kohn's generalizations, modern Polish "nationalism" (in the Anglo-American sense of the term) originated, like its counterpart in Western Europe, in the atmosphere of the universalist ideas of the Enlightenment, as an ideology not of the prepolitical folk community, but of the nation-state, that is of a *political* community formed by a common political history. Moreover, using Kohn's typology, one has to recognize that before the final catastrophe of the Polish state, the most outstanding ideologists of the nation-building process in Poland—Kollataj * and Staszic—represented a nationalism that was par excellence "Western," making conscious reference to the French model even though they differed in the aspects that they stressed. For Staszic, an inseparable part of the French model was the

burgher alliance with absolutism, while Kollataj * was closer to Jacobin thinking on the nation.

The gradual replacement of the political definition of nation by the ethno-linguistic conception was certainly one of the most important shifts in the Polish thought of the late Enlightenment. To a certain extent it was fostered by the growing radicalism of certain writers, like Franciszek Jezierski who wanted to put stress on the language and culture or the "commonality," but its main cause was certainly the impact of the partitions. Thus, for instance, a long step towards the ethno-linguistic conception of nation was made by Staszic: this conceptual shift enabled him to emphasize the Slavic ethnic traits, common to Poles and Russians, and thus to provide arguments for a Panslavic program. On the whole, we can safely say that the growing importance of the ethno-linguistic conception of the Polish nation was caused by an external factor: the downfall of the Polish state.

Second, the lack of interest shown by the Polish Enlightenment thinkers, including representatives of "Enlightened Sarmatism," in the nation-building function of religion is very instructive in this context. The identification of Polishness with Catholicism, which was characteristic of the Baroque mentality of the "Sarmatian" opponents of the Enlightenment, was clearly incompatible with the secular, political concept of the nation and with the Enlightenment program for the modernization of the Commonwealth. Kollataj and Staszic, the chief ideologists of the Polish Enlightenment, were Catholic priests, but their consciousness was much more evidently defined by their membership in the Enlightenment ranks than by their membership in the estate of the clergy. Their philosophy was deist and definitely anticlerical; their program for the modernization of the nation was one of cultural but not of religious unification, for it assumed that all inhabitants of the country ought to become conscious of being Poles, irrespective of their ethnic origins or religious beliefs. This stemmed not only from their concept of the nation, but also from their

awareness of the fact that "Latin" Catholicism, the religion of the Polish and polonized nobility, was not the religion of an absolute majority of members of the other estates: half of the peasant population of the Commonwealth belonged to the Uniate or Orthodox churches, and the urban population mainly consisted of Protestants or Jews. In these circumstances, the Enlightenment rationalist and political concept of the nation was eminently reinforced by ordinary common sense, which suggested that to equate Polishness with Roman Catholicism of the Latin rite would consolidate existing ethnic divisions and come into collision with a program for the cultural and political integration of the whole population of the state. ¹

Third, the modern Enlightenment idea of the "sovereign nation" was received in Poland on ground prepared by native noble republican traditions. The case of the Enlightenment "republicans" clearly demonstrates that attachment to old noble republicanism facilitated the acceptance of modern republicanism, even though it struck blows not only at absolutism, but also at the estate privileges of the gentry. It is also evident that even the advocates of a hereditary monarchy made references to the legacy of noble republicanism and that even Staszic's bourgeois ideology, which saw only the social side of this legacy and thus the anachronistic "noble absolutism," represented the exception rather than the rule. Not only Wojciech Turski, but also Kollataj*, saw the connection between "old" and "new" republicanism and called the results of the labors of the Great Sejm "a new republican nation." Despite the persistent stereotype, monarchism—and monarchism hemmed round with a thousand qualifications, at that—was only a phase and not the main achievement and final result of the Enlightenment watershed in Polish political thought.

Fourth, the emphasis on territorial and legal integration, conceiving full-fledged nations as homogeneous and "centralized" social units entailed, of course, an increasing awareness of the need of linguistic and cultural homogeneity, al-

though "nation" as such was defined politically, irrespective of linguistic and cultural criteria. Ernest Gellner in his excellent little book *Nations and Nationalism* defines nationalism as a species of patriotism which favors cultural homogeneity.² Polish nationalism of the Age of Enlightenment, exactly like its French counterpart, provides an important corroboration of this thesis. As in the West, modern nationalism emerged in Poland as a unifying and leveling force. We can say, using Gellner's words, that it was "based on a culture striving to be a high (literate) culture" and that this was the reason why it could not recognize separate national identities of the Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian peasants. The later exuberance of romantic idealizations of the cultural diversity of the old Sarmatian Commonwealth should not obscure this important fact.

Our fifth conclusion provides a correction to Meinecke's thesis on the necessary connection between the "political" concept of the nation and the idea of the *absolute* sovereignty of the nation-state. The Polish men of the Enlightenment, even those who accorded absolute priority to national sovereignty over civil liberty, always thought of sovereignty in the spirit of the law of nations and did not therefore make it "absolute." On the contrary, they wished to ensure the rights of every nation through *limitation* of the sovereignty of states, subordinating them to a certain universal order, to be realized either in the form of Staszic's "association of nations" or Kollataj's* concept of the "Western Empire." Analogous aspirations—linked with the revolutionary idea of the brotherhood of the peoples, and various concepts of "religious progress" which were to be based on the "Christianization of politics"—were also to be characteristic of the ideologists of the Romantic era.

Finally, despite the efforts of interpreters who try to focus the political thought of the Polish Enlightenment around the peasant question, it must be said that it was the formal, legal aspect of this question—that is, serfdom and its abuses—which was important at the time, rather than the broadly con-

ceived agrarian question. Like the French Enlightenment and the pre-Jacobin phase of the French Revolution, the Polish Enlightenment in the persons of Staszic and Kollataj * arrived at the idea of a "nation of property owners" and did not go beyond it; and this idea concentrated on the burgher problem and not the peasant question.³ Without seeking to detract at all from the progressiveness of the Polish Enlightenment, we must realize that it was only the revolutionary radicals of the post-1830 era who grasped that the peasant problem was essentially a question of land ownership. It is really difficult to justify the peculiar situation which developed in Marxist scholarship in the 1950s and still to the present day influences the literature on the subject: here every mention of the peasant question in the ideology of the Enlightenment thinkers is stressed, while what is primarily taken up in the ideology of the Polish Democratic Society—the people who first formulated a program for radical agrarian reform—is the inconsistency and "class limitations" of its approach to the peasant question. The ideal of total expropriation of the nobility was made the yardstick for consistency in this, suggesting that this constituted the normal capitalist path of development and ignoring the fact that in reality there was no European country, not excepting the home of the Great Revolution, which had carried out this task or have even intended to do so.

I think that it is high time to adopt a new approach to the question: to distinguish clearly the question of serfdom from the economic dimension of the agrarian question and to give credit where credit is due for discovering the latter.

I stress this without any intention of belittling the contribution of Enlightenment thought. It brought "class divisions" clearly into relief, and the fact that it put up an intelligent defense of the interests of the nobility, bourgeoisie, or property owners in general was not in my opinion detrimental; it rather indicates that these ideas were more firmly embedded in the realities of contemporary society than was the ideology of the revolutionaries of the Romantic epoch—people who were isolated from their own class, who were mainly emi-

grés, and who paid dearly for their radicalism by a tragic severance from the real aspirations of either the nobility or the common people. It would be possible to say that before the third partition, the thought of Kollataj, Staszic, and other Enlightenment ideologists was superior to that of Edward Dembowski and Stanislaw Worcell⁴ in that it enjoyed real and verifiable support from certain social groups which had been stirred to political activity in the Polish state before the loss of independence.

6—

The Legacy of the Enlightenment and Some New Dilemmas in the Political Thought of Tadeusz Kosciuszko *

The figure of Tadeusz Kosciuszko deserves separate treatment for at least three reasons. First, he was a hero of the liberation struggle both in Poland and in North America, and his name and career are therefore much better known (although that is not to say well known) in the English-speaking world than are those of other representatives of the Polish Enlightenment. Secondly, although Kosciuszko was not a systematic thinker and certainly not a theorist of the caliber of Staszic or Kollataj*, his writings are of considerable cognitive interest in that they document the political consciousness of the radical current in the Polish Enlightenment. One Polish scholar has even claimed that the ideas that Kosciuszko put forward at the time of the 1794 insurrection represented "the pinnacle of development of the philosophy of the Polish Enlightenment."¹ Thirdly, Kosciuszko's proclamations in 1794 and also his writings in the last period of his life constituted a transition from the problems of Enlightenment thought, which concentrated on saving *the existing state*, to the political problems of the post-partition period, which were obviously concentrated on *restoring statehood*. In this

respect, Kosciuszko's ideological legacy can be treated as a notional bridge between the epoch of Enlightenment reforms designed to strengthen and modernize the Polish-Lithuanian state and the epoch of national uprisings which was initiated by Kosciuszko's own insurrection.

As I have already pointed out, ² Kosciuszko did not fight to defend the "monarchical" May 3 Constitution, but for the independence and integrity of the nation and for universal liberty within that nation. He left the question of the future form of government open, to be decided by a freely elected Sejm in the liberated fatherland. There can however be no doubt that his own views were unwaveringly republican although they were completely unalloyed by specifically "Sarmatian," conservative republicanism. In contrast with the "old republicanism" of the confederates of Bar, which linked a glorification of "golden liberty" with Counter-Reformation Baroque Catholicism and with the defense of their own estate interests, Kosciuszko's republicanism was from the very beginning a "new" republicanism—socially radical, separating church from state, and suspicious of the clergy. Kosciuszko was more clearly aware of the difference between the "old" and "new" republicanism than was Wojciech Turski, who, as we have seen, admitted at one stage the possibility of a tactical alliance with the old-magnate opposition to the initiators of the May 3 Constitution. This resulted partly from the fact that the American Revolution had played a major role in forming Kosciuszko's views. His participation in that revolution, his acquaintance with its ideas, and his direct contact with an American society that was free of the feudal ballast of the Old World, made it possible for Kosciuszko to retain his attachment to the libertarian traditions of Polish noble democracy, but at the same time to distinguish its universally republican elements (such as "limited government," "government by consent," "civic rights," and also "civic humanism" and "republican virtue") from elements of estate-based particularism.

The American influence should not however be exagger-

ated. On some questions, Kosciuszko's views were more radical than those of the American founding fathers. On the matter of radical equality, for example, Kosciuszko was closer to the radically antiracist and anticolonial Guillaume Raynal (as expressed in his *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, 1770) which was, as we have indicated, the rule rather than the exception in enlightened Polish public opinion.³ Kosciuszko's abolitionism was defiant in character, which, as M. K. Dziewanowski has suggested, could not have pleased his American comrades-in-arms and explains the reserve with which he was treated by George Washington.⁴ When General Gates presented him with a Negro slave, Agrippa Hull, Kosciuszko immediately freed him, taking the opportunity to state that all slavery was immoral and repugnant.⁵ When the American Congress handed him his back pay of \$12,208.54, Kosciuszko, in spite of his currently (1798) difficult financial circumstances, donated the whole sum to the purchase, freeing, and education of Negro slaves. This was in line with the provisions of his will, which had been drawn up towards the end of his second stay in America. It has been rightly pointed out that the text of this will reads like "a bold, progressive abolitionist manifesto".⁶

I, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, being just on my departure from America, do hereby declare and direct that, should I make no other testamentary disposition of my property in the United States, I hereby authorize my friend, Thomas Jefferson, to employ the whole thereof in purchasing negroes from among his own or any others, and giving them liberty in my name; in giving them an education in trade or otherwise; in having them instructed for their new condition in the duties of morality, which may make them good neighbors, good fathers and mothers, husbands and wives; in their duty as citizens, teaching them to be defenders of their liberty and country, of the good order of society, and in whatsoever may make them happy and useful. 5th day of May 1798. T. Kosciuszko.⁷

On matters of religion, the contrast between Kosciuszko's "new republicanism" and the "old republicanism" of the confederates of Bar was particularly evident. The confederates, who called themselves "the servants of Mary," were fighting for "the faith and freedom,"⁸ and in the name of this watchword were firmly opposed to the granting of equal rights to dissidents (Protestants), or to schismatics (Orthodox Christians), as had been categorically demanded by the Empress of Russia with the support of Prussia, Denmark, England, and Sweden. Kosciuszko, however, clearly separated the question of faith from that of liberty. He proclaimed the equal rights of all religious faiths, not only Christian but also Muslim and Jewish.⁹ During the insurrection he put these ideas into practice. On his orders, the Supreme National Council was formed in the space of one week to set up in Warsaw a chapel where Orthodox services could be held and also to organize religious services for Prussian prisoners of war of the Evangelical persuasion.¹⁰ He was particularly well-disposed towards the Orthodox and Uniate clergy, who, after Roman Catholics, were the most numerous group in the territory of the Polish Commonwealth. He treated them as Polish, and wished to win them over to Polishness both by introducing freedom of religious practice and by "suitable provision for priests." With this aim in mind, he brought an Orthodox priest into the Supreme Council and ordered that all other national agencies should follow this example. In his "Proclamation to the Polish, Greek-Oriental, non-Uniate clergy, both regular and secular," issued at his camp near Polaniec on May 7, 1794 he wrote,

Understand that in being faithful to your true Fatherland, and remaining firmly bound to the Polish Nation, you will become worthy of enjoying the rights and privileges of liberty and all the benefits of good government which the Poles are purchasing with their blood.

Yes, priests! You, together with the whole people, are slaves of the Muscovites, but with us you will be esteemed priests; with us, your rites, your property, your income, are

valued as highly as those of our own priests. Fear not that differences in opinions and rites should prevent us loving you as brothers and fellow-countrymen. . . . By acts of kindness and goodwill, we wish to bind you, our brothers, to our common fatherland. And so join your hearts with those of the Poles, who by arms are seeking their freedom and yours.¹¹

This proclamation shows that Kosciuszko—who came from a polonized Belorussian family¹²—apparently used the words "Pole" and "Polish" in two senses: a narrower sense, referring to people who spoke Polish and practiced the Roman Catholic faith, and a broader sense which embraced all "fellow-countrymen," thus including those Uniates who spoke Ukrainian or White Russian, and even the Orthodox clergy who came under the authority of the Russian Metropolitan. In the first sense, the adjective "Polish" corresponded significantly with the word "English," while in the second sense, it covered all the inhabitants of the Commonwealth and was thus the equivalent of the word "British." Because Moscow was exploiting the anti-Polish resentments of the Orthodox population of the Commonwealth, Kosciuszko naturally made a distinction between the Orthodox clergy and "our own priests." But there can be no doubt that he considered them to be fellow-countrymen, the children of a common fatherland, and that he was expressing a desire to include the Orthodox in the Polish nation, on equal terms with Catholics. And thus in his eyes, membership of a nation was a matter of political loyalty and not of language, ethnic origins, or religion.

It is quite a separate issue that this viewpoint, which has already been discussed, could be linked with "the Jacobin concept of the nation," stressing the necessity of linguistic unification. This was in fact true in Kosciuszko's case, for he believed that the development of a Polish education system in the eastern territories would lead to the linguistic polonization of the Orthodox population, putting an end to their "religious fanaticism" and separatist tendencies. Be that as it

may, his views were far removed from an identification of Polishness with Catholicism. This also explains the minimal role played by military chaplains in Kosciuszko's forces, which contrasted with the emphasis placed on secular civic education. A few years later, in connection with the organization of the Polish Legions in Italy by Józef Wybicki, Kosciuszko stated *expressis verbis* that a Polish army needed "a republican catechism to replace superstition." ¹³

The proclamation to the Orthodox clergy was preceded by Kosciuszko's proclamation to the whole Polish clergy (March 1794). This called on clergy of all faiths and denominations to make voluntary contributions to the national cause, at the same time warning them that if they failed to comply the insurrectionary authorities would "force" these donations. If priests became involved in activities directed against the general interest, they were even threatened with punishments on the French model: "Foreign examples will certainly provide you with the most fundamental evidence to the extent of the harm which the clergy must everywhere have done to itself wherever it contemplated separating its interests from the general interests of the fatherland."¹⁴ Although these words were addressed to the whole clergy, it is clear that their main target was the Roman Catholic clergy. Dissidents and schismatics who had been tempted by the protection of foreign powers had to be wooed over to the national cause, but in the case of the Catholic clergy demands could be made. And threats were required because a considerable part of the clergy constituted a conservative force which was potentially hostile to the social aims of the insurrection.

During the insurrection, Kosciuszko's radicalism had to be held firmly in check. It was not merely a question of bringing the common people of town and countryside into the struggle, but of doing so in a way that would not alienate the wealthy nobility or the higher clergy. It is nevertheless worth emphasizing that Kosciuszko's beliefs were much more radical than his actions. When tactical considerations encouraged him to speak out, or at least did not prevent him

from doing so, he formulated his principles sharply and unambiguously. Thus, for example, during his stay in Paris in 1793, he submitted a memorandum to Le Brun, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he assured the leaders of the French Republic that the revolution being prepared in Poland would after its victory introduce a political system consistent with the declaration and decrees of the French Convention of November and December 1792: he promises, for example, "to abolish royal power," "abolish the higher clergy," and to arm the whole nation.¹⁵ One may of course conclude that these were excessive promises and that their primary aim was to obtain immediate practical gain: to convince the French government that the Polish insurrection lay in their best interests, and that they should extend to it maximum assistance. It seems however that in this instance, tactical considerations—the existence of which cannot be denied—did not clash with Kosciuszko's sincerely held beliefs: he almost certainly promised too much, but he honestly wished to move in the direction indicated. In a situation where tactical considerations might entail betrayal of his own principles, Kosciuszko preferred to take refuge in rigid adherence to principle. An example of this can be found in his attitude to an offer of cooperation with Napoleon which the French side pressed strenuously in 1806. Kosciuszko had been prepared to serve the French *Republic* without any conditions or guarantees and did not even hesitate to suggest that Polish soldiers should take an oath of loyalty phrased as follows: "I swear to hate royal and aristocratic power, I swear fidelity to the French Republic, and the unfringeable principles of liberty and equality."¹⁶ But he was highly suspicious of the man who had usurped imperial power and thus betrayed the republican ideals of the revolution. He thus agreed to cooperate with Napoleon only in the interests of Poland, on specified conditions, after receiving specific guarantees. When he heard from Minister Fouché that, "The Emperor will never agree to any conditions, you must surren-

der yourself to him blindly and be obedient to his will," ¹⁷ he refused all cooperation in the most categorical terms.

When on a motion put forth by Alexander I, the Congress of Vienna debated setting up a Kingdom of Poland formed from part of the Polish territories and under Russian suzerainty but with its own liberal constitution, Kosciuszko disclosed his views on the religious question and on the relationship between church and state. I am thinking here of his memorandum to Prince Adam Czartoryski—a text which seemed to several generations of Polish historians so flagrant in its excessive radicalism and anticlericalism that it was not published until 1965.¹⁸ Here the leader of the national insurrection, now a legendary figure, admitted to holding deist views, sharply attacked all institutionalized revealed religions and accused the clergy of deliberately duping the nation in their own interests and in the interests of despots. "The priests," he wrote, "will always exploit the ignorance and superstitions of the people and will make use of religion (of this you may be assured) as a mask, behind which they conceal the hypocrisy and criminality of their actions."¹⁹ These arguments, which clearly echo the anticlerical verses of Staszic's *The Human Race*, led to the conclusion that the state should be based on the dictates of natural religion but should hold itself aloof from all churches. Moreover, the separation of church and state should entail the laying down of closely defined limits for the activities of the church, in particular the curtailment of its influence upon the education of young people, with all civic education placed in the hands of the laity. "The nation should be the lord and master of its own fate, and its rights should therefore be superior to those of the church; no religion could contravene them by appealing to divine law, but on the contrary, every religion should be obedient to the laws established by a given nation."²⁰

In the Polish conditions this was a very radical standpoint, but by no means an isolated one. Kosciuszko's anticlerical tendencies were as strong as those of Staszic and were thus

stronger, or at least more clearly expressed, than in the case of the majority of ideologists of the Polish Enlightenment. At the same time it must be stressed that in his general concept of the nation, together with its implications on the question of relations between church and state, he was entirely in line with the predominant Enlightenment view. This treated the nation as a *political* category, covering the whole of the population of the state, and was not therefore able to recognize Roman Catholicism as a constitutive factor and inseparable element in Polish nationality. The identification of "Pole" with "Roman Catholic" was incompatible both with political tradition and with strivings to preserve or rebuild the state within its prepartition boundaries. One must remember that only 53 percent of the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth professed Roman Catholicism; ²¹ territories settled by Uniates—that is, by a population whose priests despite their recognition of the superior authority of Rome were not admitted to the privileges of the ruling religion and who in civilizational terms represented Eastern Christianity—began only about fifty miles from Warsaw. In these circumstances, the stereotype of the "Catholic Pole" characterized the views of the ethnically non-Polish population which wished to emphasize its ethnic and cultural separateness. Within the ambit of Polish culture, this stereotype became predominant only in the post-Romantic epoch as a result of the disintegration of political legitimism—that is, *de facto* abandonment of the ideal of the "integrity" of the Commonwealth that was so dear to Kosciuszko. In other words, the victory of this stereotype was the obverse of the victory of the ethno-linguistic concept of the nation—a concept which entailed "the diminution of the Fatherland" (in the phrase coined by Edward Abramowski)²², and thus a consequence which a generation brought up in the tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian political community found hard to accept. It is not surprising that in Poland the transition from the political to the ethno-linguistic concept of the nation was very long and complicated. In the transitional period, which

roughly coincided with the era of Romanticism, Poland could no longer be defined by the predominant concept of nation as a purely political category—for the Polish nation no longer existed as a political entity—but it still refused to define itself in ethnolinguistic terms, because to abandon "non-lapsed political rights" seemed like betrayal. For a time, a way out of this dilemma was found by defining the nation as a community of *tradition* and of *the spirit*, which linked all the lands of the former Commonwealth. This concept, especially in the hands of eminent men who came from the multinational eastern borderlands, often took the form of dreams of a multicultural and multilinguistic nation with joint spiritual tradition and unity of purpose. This of course came into conflict with the Enlightenment ideal of the cultural and linguistic unity of the nation. But at the same time, the Romantic generation opposed the narrowing down of the nation to the boundaries of the Polish language or the Roman Catholic religion, and *in this sense* it kept faith with the ideological legacy of Kosciuszko's generation. Ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences were simply disregarded. Joachim Lelewel, the great historian of the Romantic movement, probably went farthest in this direction. He planned that language or religious belief would no longer be factors in the concept of the nation and dreamed of a Poland where "no differences would exist among the peoples: Polish, Lithuanian, German, Samogitian, Ruthenian, of which it is composed." He appealed to his fellow-countrymen: "Do not differentiate among the sons of Poland, whether they speak in the Ruthenian, or Polish, or Lithuanian tongue, or whatever be their religion, if they act together with you, and declare themselves in the name of the people, go forward with them together, as with brothers." ²³

The great Romantic poet, Adam Mickiewicz, professed similar ideas and embedded them deeply in the national consciousness. One must however be careful not to generalize from the statements of poets and visionary historians. Whether we like it or not, the vast majority of the politically

active Poles, and especially democrats, were closer in the Romantic era to French centralist and unificatory thinking on the national question. They were fairly united in their support for the integration of the historic territories of the Commonwealth, combatting all tendencies not only towards separatism but even towards regionalism, and after the emancipation and education of the serfs they expected swift results in polonization.²⁴ It is therefore fair to say that the fate of the Polish version of the "Jacobin concept of the nation" was quite varied in the Romantic period. Political writers as a rule supported this concept, usually without being aware of the inevitable conflict between Polish political legitimism and the nation-building processes taking place among the non-Polish peoples of the former Commonwealth. The most outstanding representatives of Romantic culture however took the path leading to the spiritualization of the concept of the nation, defining the nation as a spiritual community which could exist without a "political body." They would have agreed with Lord Acton who defined post-partition Poland as "a nation demanding to be united in state—a soul, as it were, wandering in search of a body in which to begin life over again."²⁵ With the passage of time their idea of nation was becoming more and more spiritualized and thus more and more independent of "bodily existence" in the form of a state. In this manner patriotism came to be identified with fidelity to the "national idea" which had been handed down to Poles by their tradition and revealed in a new form as a general human mission of salvation. The nation thus ceased to be understood as a certain empirical reality, for it was now defined as a "congregation of spirits" with a common purpose, honorably singled out by the greatness of their mission.

Kosciuszko was firmly rooted in his own epoch, but in certain respects one can detect in his thinking the first steps towards the spiritualization of the concept of the nation, and the political idealism that was characteristic of the Romantic era. His emigré writings provide a typical example of this, in particular his brochure *Czy Polacy moga* sie* wybic* na niepod-*

ległosc *? (*Can the Poles win through to independence?*), 1800, written together with Józef Pawlikowski.²⁶ Here we can find the categorical statement that "the sixteen million-strong nation" (thus covering all the inhabitants of the former Commonwealth) could be free whenever it wanted,²⁷ because everything depended on moral and spiritual factors: will, "enthusiasm for liberty and honor," zeal, energy, and of course, the rightness of the cause. When the spirit of liberty came to reign in the nation millions would be galvanized to battle, and when Europe became aware of the general European significance of the Polish struggle for liberty the Polish insurrection would be transformed into a generalized struggle against tyrants—a struggle in which the "forty million republicans of Europe" would take part.²⁸ "The splendid revolution of 1794" had been in Poland a modest foretaste of what a nation inspired by the idea of liberty was capable of: then, the Polish peasant had felt "created anew," and the moral righteousness of the insurrection had aroused respect even among its enemies.²⁹ In the future insurrection, the Polish cause, if it were only linked with the cause of liberty, would win powerful allies in enemy countries: The Moscow peasant, so tormented by cruelties would use it to break his own yoke, the Cossack would use it to regain his former liberties, the enslaved nations of the Hapsburg monarchy, especially the Hungarians, would take advantage of it to regain national independence. The equipment of the army was not a particularly important matter, because if morale were high, the soldiers' most terrible weapon was the scythe.³⁰ Naturally, this brochure went into as many as seven editions by 1843: its contents and style were eminently well suited to the Romantic image of the brotherhood of peoples, the natural solidarity that existed among all the enslaved, the unity of aspirations of all honest Poles and the miracle-working powers of the spirit.

The revolutionaries of the Romantic era accused the reformers of the Enlightenment epoch of fearing to lose the support of the nobility, of "the unhappy idea of wanting to

please everyone," and consequently of contenting themselves with half-measures that pleased no one.³¹ One result of their activities which the Romantics considered disastrous for Poland was the May 3 Constitution, followed by the Kosciuszko insurrection. It was admitted that in order to persuade them to take part in the insurrection, Kosciuszko promised the peasantry more than the May Constitution had offered. But he was criticized for excessive mildness, incompetence, and reluctance to make use of truly revolutionary means for the struggle. Wiktor Heltman, a leader of the Polish Democratic Society, wrote, "Kosciuszko ruined Poland! True, the fate of the nation did not lie in the hands of one man alone. Poland was not destroyed because the weak-willed Commander directed her by his efforts. It was the egoism of the nobility that pushed her into the grave! But Kosciuszko held power in his hands, and the highest power at that; he had the love and trust of the people, and he could have used even the most violent means. He did not use them. And therefore the terrible responsibility is his also."³²

These words well demonstrate the distance that lay between the radicalism of the Enlightenment epoch and that of the age of Romanticism. As I have already pointed out, the reformers of the Enlightenment wished primarily to win over the nobility to their ideas and they could not therefore be radical on the peasant question. The May 3 Constitution assured the peasantry only of "the protection of the law and of the government of the country." This was less than the leaders of the reform party had wished to achieve, but it must be admitted that even so they did not go so far on the peasant question as the radicals of Heltman's generation. But their moderation here need not be unequivocally condemned, for it resulted from consideration of the realities of the balance of social power. It was easier for the radical democrats and revolutionary socialists of the Great Emigration to be consistent revolutionaries: they lived in their emigré world, isolated from real Polish conditions; they could not in any case count on the support of most of the nobility and so they did

not take them into account; they had nothing to lose and they had the whole fatherland to win. A struggle carried out by the most radical, consistently revolutionary means might of course not be successful and thus might lead to repression which would considerably worsen the situation in the country. But this was evident and significant only from the viewpoint of Poles in Poland, and not of emigré Poles. From the emigré point of view the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Polish lands and the severity of repression were of secondary importance to the basic cause: the independence of Poland and the homecoming of the emigrés. From this perspective it was easy to choose radical revolution. It risked nothing because in any event Poland did not exist as an independent state and the difference between a heavier or a lighter yoke seemed quite immaterial. It promised everything, because the experience of earlier insurrections (the Kosciuszko Insurrection and the 1830 November Uprising) indicated clearly that "gentle revolutions" were powerless in the face of the might of the partitioning powers and therefore that one could count only on "violent means." The only possible alternative to these means might be provided by waiting for a favorable international situation, for example a war between the Western powers and Russia or a war among the partitioning powers. Patriotic impatience did not permit this option to be taken up and social radicalism indeed enjoined its condemnation.

The Enlightenment reformers were dealing with different choices. They wanted to *save* a state which *still existed* and they could therefore not afford to lose the support of the ruling estate or to threaten the interests of the absolute monarchies that bordered on Poland, who were frightened by the revolution in France and saw the spectre of "Jacobinism" stalking everywhere. The first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772 and the continual intervention of the Russians in Polish internal affairs offered a powerful argument in favor of reform—an argument which they wished to use to arouse the mass of the nobility and *win them over* to see the necessity of modernizing the

political system of the state. This argument might have become counterproductive if it had threatened the grounds of existence of those it was designed to win over. It is therefore obvious that the reforms proposed had clearly defined limits and that in general it was quite unthinkable to raise the standard for an agrarian revolution. The only remaining alternative was therefore a "gentle revolution" with all its concomitant contradictions and inconsistencies. It is understandable that fifty years later these inconsistencies appeared blatantly obvious. But it is significant that radical Western thinkers who were able to judge the efforts of those who created the May 3 Constitution with a proper impartiality and in a comparative historical perspective were usually less inclined to indulge in condemnation. It was not the egoism of the contemporary Polish nobility that struck them but rather their ability to restrain their estate egoism in the name of the common good of the nation. Here, for example, is Karl Marx's judgment on the Constitution of May 3:

The constitution, it is true, retained the privileges of the nobility and did not liberate the peasantry, but it ensured them the protection of the law, and paved the way to emancipation by a voluntary pact between the peasants and the noble landowners. It numbered the urban population among those citizens enjoying equal political rights and it sanctioned the notorious Polish freedom of publication, and also religious liberty, which had been violated first under Austrian influence and later under Russian. Despite all its shortcomings, this constitution looms up against the background of Russo-Prusso-Austrian barbarism as the only work of liberty (*das einzige Freiheitswerk*) which Eastern Europe has ever created independently. And it emerged exclusively from the privileged class, from the nobility. The history of the world has never seen another example of such nobility of the nobility [*Adel des Adels*].³³

This exceptionally high praise was in no way contradicted by the statement that the reforms carried out were insuffi-

cient to inspire the peasantry with enthusiasm for a popular war, and that as a result the reformers' work was doomed to defeat. Marx wrote, "It is inscribed in letters of crimson on the pages of history that no revolution can be victorious if it is carried out within the confines convenient to the ruling class. Nonetheless, Poland could have developed further on this basis had not Russia found support in a revolt of the Polish aristocracy, in the renegation of Catherine's favorite, Stanislaw Poniatowski, in the withdrawal of England, and the *baseness of Prussia*." ³⁴

But let us return to Kosciuszko. It must be made clear that his program for the solution of the peasant question and for making Polish patriots of the peasant population of the Commonwealth went much further than the program of the May Constitution. This was so for at least two reasons. First, Kosciuszko was more radical in social terms than those who drew up the Constitution, and he was perfectly aware that "liberty could be defended only by the hand of a free people";³⁵ he was not afraid of spontaneous action by the people; on the contrary, he counted on cooperation between a regular army and armed masses of the people (which to a certain extent can be attributed to his experience in America.)³⁶ Second, he was not a reformer in an existing state, but the leader of an insurrection and so in the nature of things had to attempt to broaden the social base of his *de nomine* dictatorial power. His attempts were inconsistent, but he did make them. In the Manifesto of Polaniec of May 7, 1794 he conferred on the peasants liberty of person, he reduced and legally regulated the corvée, that is the number of days that they owed service on noble estates and secured the rights of the peasantry to the lands that they cultivated for their own use, which meant in practice that they were given regulated obligations to the manor. To sum up, this meant the abolition of serfdom and the award of conditional property rights defined as follows: "Ownership of the grounds possessed with the obligations ascribed to them, according to the regulations stated above, no villager can be removed by a landowner, unless he has previously taken the matter before the local custodian [that is,

the government supervisor] and proved that the villager has not carried out his duties." ³⁷

This was not, admittedly, an agrarian revolution, but it was certainly an enormous step forward, which unfortunately came to nothing when the uprising was defeated. But although Kosciuszko's insurrection was unsuccessful, crushed on the pretext of combatting "Jacobinism" in the Eastern part of Europe, it acted as a shield to protect the achievements of the French revolution. Marx and Engels summarized this: "In 1794, when the French Revolution was only with difficulty resisting the forces of the coalition, its deliverance came from the famed Polish insurrection." ³⁸

Perhaps it was for this reason—although not exclusively or even chiefly—that Jules Michelet, the great French democrat and historian of the French revolution, firmly repudiated Heltman's statement, quoted above, that Kosciuszko "ruined Poland" by using half-measures instead of "violent measures." In his *Democratic Legend* about Kosciuszko, he admitted that his hero was overly gentle for a revolutionary, but went on to say that this gentleness was not merely "a noble error of the human heart." It was admittedly not in Kosciuszko's character to make use of "violent measures," but at the same time it was impossible for an insurrection against foreign invaders to be combined with a civil war. Poland in decay needed a leader who would integrate the nation, symbolizing the possibility of nationwide unity and solidarity. Only a leader of that kind could leave behind him a legend that appealed to the hearts of all Poles with the exception of the most firmly entrenched defenders of the old and rotten social order—and this is what Kosciuszko accomplished. Michelet wrote,

Is it certain that a Kosciuszko endowed with greater citizenly severity would have saved Poland? I doubt it—but I am convinced that it was precisely his kindliness, kindliness of a high order, which brought such countless, endlessly beneficial results for the future of his fatherland. It won over to him on

the one hand the hearts of all nations, and many became convinced that absolute human kindness was to be found in this Pole. On the other hand, various estates in Poland, so unhappily rent asunder, found in this high moral excellence a new ideal and a new rallying point for their unification. The nobility saw him as a crusading knight, and the villagers found him to have a good heart; they felt that he was their man, that he was Poland itself.

On the day when this man of faith, leading his uncouth hordes against the Russian army, abandoned all routine and ages-old pride, deserted the noble cavalry, dismounted from his horse and stood in the ranks of the peasant scythe-bearers, on that day a great thing was brought about for Poland and for the world. To that day, Poland was only the heroic nobility. From that day on, it became a different nation—a great nation that could not be wiped out. It would not allow itself to be extinguished and buried as long as the spark of national vitality shone out—it penetrated into the hearts of the people, and stayed there along with the memory of Kosciuszko.³⁹

Michelet aptly emphasized those facets of Kosciuszko's personality which made him the paradigmatic hero of the new Polish nation, which was no longer a nation of the nobility alone. His dressing in peasant costume and his use against the invader of peasant battalions armed with scythes was undoubtedly a most spectacular symbol and was also, as should be underlined, reinforced by his whole attitude to life, stemming from profound conviction and not from a desire to obtain theatrical effects. Kosciuszko was a folk hero not only when he led the scythemen or appeared in a peasant's overcoat. In contrast with the Sarmatian leaders of the old Poland, he rejected robes dripping with gold—indeed he considered them quite indecent—and went about his everyday business in an ordinary grey shortcoat. Everything he did reflected unusual modesty: even at the thanksgiving mass for

the liberation of Warsaw, he appeared not accompanied by a retinue of generals to the strains of the *Te Deum laudamus*, but alone and by the back door, not taking his place next to the King.⁴⁰ He did not use a dictatorial tone in his proclamations and orders (even if, formally, he was in possession of dictatorial powers) but appealed to honor and civic conscience; he constantly recalled his responsibility to the nation and made "reports" to the nation in which he stressed that his own role was limited to serving it, that his authority had strictly defined limits, and that the political system of the liberated fatherland would depend exclusively on the freely expressed sovereign will of the entire nation.⁴¹ He made fun of the "superstitious practices of royalty and nobility" and stated categorically that he "would not fight for the nobility alone." His concept of the Polish nation (which has already been discussed) embraced all the inhabitants of the partitioned Commonwealth, irrespective of their estate, property, religion, or ethnic origin. Not only did separate units of peasant volunteers fight in the ranks of his army, but there was also a volunteer regiment of Jewish cavalry under the command of Berek Joselewicz; it was on Kosciuszko's initiative that a regiment of this kind was set up, as an entirely natural demonstration of the attachment of the Polish Jews to the common homeland, from whose liberation, "all together will draw benefits."⁴² The greatest enthusiasm for the insurrection was shown by the plebeian social strata, by the landless or impoverished nobility who had been deprived of participation in public affairs by the property census introduced by the May Constitution, and by the Wasaw craftsmen under the leadership of the shoemaker Jan Kilinski*. One can unreservedly accept the view of a socialist historian, Adam Próchnik, that Kosciuszko's insurrection was popular in character and that "he knew how to get a great deal more energy and strength out of the nation than did the later independence struggles."⁴³

Michelet rightly noted yet another aspect of Kosciuszko's character: the ability to arouse the respect and even admira-

tion of those against whom he fought. As he put it, Kosciuszko "awakened hitherto unknown feelings in the hearts of Russians." They began

to blaze, seeing Poland wounded, chopped to pieces on the battlefield in the person of Kosciuszko. The most distrustful creatures in the world, the Russian peasant and the Russian soldier, whom you can crush but cannot move, found themselves defenseless in the face of the eloquent moral testimony of this great sacrifice, and felt unjust. . . . A true miracle was seen: the stones wept, the polar ice-cap wept, the Cossacks burst into tears, recalling—too late, alas!—their Polish origins. Their commander, Platov, when he arrived in 1815 at Fontainebleau and saw a poor exile, saw the unhappy shade of Poland still dragging itself along, shed bitter tears: this old robber, this man of slaughter, found that he had a human nature.⁴⁴

Today, the Romantic exaltation of these words may offend us and appear exaggerated. Despite this, there can be no doubt that the attitude of the Russians of the 1794 insurrection and to the person of Kosciuszko, differed fundamentally from the feelings which were aroused in Russia, with a few exceptions, by the later nineteenth-century Polish uprisings. It is also true that two successive Russian tsars, Paul I and Alexander I, met with Kosciuszko. Immediately on his accession to the throne, Paul I visited Kosciuszko in the Peter and Paul Fortress and restored him to liberty. This action can be partly explained in terms of his hatred for his mother, Catherine, but this is not the whole explanation: the record of the conversation between the Tsar and the imprisoned Pole contained words which would have been unthinkable if Paul had seen the prisoner as a rebel and enemy of Russia rather than as the hero of a noble cause which, while it might have been out of tune with Russian interests, nonetheless had its own validity. This can be seen in the Tsar's words about the satisfaction he drew from the conversation with Kosciuszko, which after all dealt with many sensitive

issues: "For the first time, it has fallen to my lot to speak with a citizen whom I can recognize truly to love his fatherland." ⁴⁵

Notwithstanding this, Paul, as we know, proved to be one of the greatest tyrants in the history of Russia. Nor was Kosciuszko so naive as to believe immediately in the steadfastness of the Tsar's goodwill. He admittedly agreed to accept a considerable sum of money from the Tsar (12,000 Rubles), but once he was abroad he immediately returned it, explaining that basically he had accepted this gift under duress, since an offense to the Tsar's pride might have had an adverse effect on the fate of other Polish insurrectionaries imprisoned in Russia. ⁴⁶

In contrast with Paul, Alexander I, who had been brought up in the spirit of the progressive ideas of the Enlightenment, intended to carry out liberal reforms in Russia. Among his closest friends was Adam Czartoryski, a Polish patriot, descended from an aristocratic family which—unlike other great magnate families—had supported the reform party in prepartition Poland. He was an influential member of what was called the Unofficial Committee, which was to prepare a general plan for reform, and then deputy Minister and finally (in 1804–1806) Minister for Foreign Affairs of Imperial Russia. The concept of Russian foreign policy that he worked out proclaimed the right of nations to independent existence, the necessity of observing ethical principles in politics, and also expressed faith in the possibility of eliminating wars and creating an international order which would ensure a just and lasting peace. In other words, this was a concept consistent with the views of the Polish school of "the law of nations." ⁴⁷ After being relieved at his own request of the office of Minister, Czartoryski concentrated on winning the Emperor's goodwill for the Polish cause and on creating among Poles a strong party which placed its hopes not on Napoleonic France but on Russia. As a proponent of Polish-Russian accord he took part in the Congress of Vienna, where he was still close to Alexander I as the only supporter of the Polish cause and advocate of creating from a part of Polish territo-

ries the constitutional Kingdom of Poland, which would have the emperor as its monarch, but be granted almost complete internal autonomy (its own constitution, seym, and armed forces). These circumstances meant that the hopes linked with the person of Alexander I were taken up by Kosciuszko. And at the same time, Alexander I wished to win Kosciuszko's support for his Polish plans, as the greatest moral authority among the Poles and a man who had never collaborated with Napoleon.

On this occasion, Kosciuszko did not refuse to cooperate with the Tsar of Russia. He tried to cooperate, but on his own terms. During Alexander I's preliminary negotiations with the Poles on the question of rebuilding the Kingdom of Poland, Kosciuszko presented a memorandum on the peasant question, proposing a reduction of feudal service and, above all, legal guarantees of the inviolability of peasant holdings, treating them as a kind of entailed property and thus protecting peasant land from annexation to manor estates on the pretext that from the legal point of view all land was the property of the nobility.⁴⁸ (This practice had been widespread during the period of the Duchy of Warsaw.) In April 1814, he wrote a letter to the Emperor in which he personally requested him to declare a general amnesty for Poles, to take the title of King of Poland, and to restore the Kingdom of Poland "with a free constitution, similar to that of England."⁴⁹ This letter also contained far-reaching proposals on the peasant question: that schools should be set up for the peasants at government expense and that over a period of ten years a fundamental agrarian reform should be introduced as a result of which the peasants would obtain not only full liberty of person (which they did not possess in those territories which had not earlier formed part of the Duchy of Warsaw) but also land ownership ("the use of their property with full rights of ownership").⁵⁰

Alexander's reply began with the words, "I entertain great satisfaction, General, in replying to your letter. Your dearest wishes shall be fulfilled."⁵¹ Kosciuszko, responded to these

assurances with a promise to take an oath of loyalty to Alexander I and to be present at his coronation.⁵² But in his correspondence with Adam Czartoryski, he had been fairly clear that the fulfillment of his promise was dependent on an appropriate declaration by Alexander I, as King of Poland, on the peasant question.

But the peasant question was not to be the main obstacle to cooperation between the leader of the Polish insurrection and the ruler of Russia. The chief obstacle proved to be the question of the kingdom's frontiers or, as Kosciuszko himself put it, the question of the "integrity" of the fatherland. In May 1815 Kosciuszko met Alexander I in Austria and was disturbed by his reluctance to state precisely the territories that were to constitute the restored kingdom. In June he wrote a letter to the Emperor in which he recalled that he was born in Lithuania and wished to know what was to happen to his native land.⁵³ He received no reply to his letter. His attitude to the creation of the Kingdom of Poland was ambivalent: he was grateful to the Tsar for restoring "the name of Poland," but he trembled at the idea that the eastern provinces would not be restored to Poland and that the new state would remain within frontiers even more restricted than those of the Duchy of Warsaw.⁵⁴ Admittedly, the Tsar had spread rumors about his alleged intention of joining the Lithuanian provinces to the Kingdom of Poland and it seemed that this would in fact happen. But Kosciuszko soon came to the conclusion that these hopes were entirely vain. He was bitterly disillusioned, for he had been convinced that the Emperor's promise to restore the Kingdom of Poland meant (and he had written of this to Jefferson in a letter dated April 2, 1816) that the Duchy of Warsaw would be extended to the Dvina and Dnieper: to the former frontiers of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nor were other promises made by the Tsar met to the extent that Kosciuszko had anticipated. He summed up the list of his disenchantments with the words, "Everything has gone up in smoke."⁵⁵

In this same letter to Jefferson, Kosciuszko claimed that at present he was the only true Pole in Europe, for other Poles were, willy-nilly, subject to foreign powers.⁵⁶ This statement shows how strongly the "political" understanding of the nation still featured in Kosciuszko's thinking. According to this concept, "being a nation" was synonymous with possessing political existence: for a nation was a free agent of history, and this being the case, subjection to a foreign yoke deprived a nation of its most essential attribute: independence. By calling himself the only "true Pole" in Europe, Kosciuszko implied that he lived in Switzerland in order to maintain his independence, in order by the very fact of being an emigré to protest against the political status quo in his homeland, and in the eyes of the world to personify the unsettled Polish question. In this way, his republican concept of the nation, which defined the nation in categories which were par excellence political—liberty, integrity and independence—was transformed into a program for sustaining the existence of the nation by reminding the world of its "non-lapsed political rights." This was also the origin of later Romantic concepts that treated emigration not as an escape but as a mission and saw insurrections as necessary manifestations of the desire to be a nation, thus evaluating them without reference to their immediate effects.

As a man of the Enlightenment, Kosciuszko of course avoided the Romantic extremism that defined membership of a nation in terms of fidelity to "the national idea" and the carrying out of "the national mission." He thought in empirical categories and by the national community understood an independent state which ensured its inhabitants civil and political liberties. But why was he so concerned about the territorial form and extent of Poland? Why did his disillusionment with Alexander stem mainly from the fact that the Emperor did not restore the Kingdom of Poland within its old frontiers—if not in the West, then at least in the East? Why did he treat ethnically and linguistically non-Polish territories as the inalienable "property" of Poland?⁵⁷ Why, in short, did he so stubbornly

adhere to the sort of political legitimism which was entirely unrealistic in the new conditions?

It would be quite anachronistic to explain this in terms of some kind of Polish "imperialism." Kosciuszko, like Kollataj * and other reformers of the Great Sejm, considered ethnic and religious differences to be immaterial in defining nationality—and it was so because he believed nationality to be *political* in character. He of course remembered that the Ukrainian peasantry had many times risen to fight against the Polish nobility but attributed this to purely social causes. For him, the peasantry of the Commonwealth was one whole mass which still had to be aroused to *Polish* national consciousness through the abolition of serfdom, grants of property rights, and general civil enfranchisement. He could see that this would be more difficult in the case of the Orthodox Ukrainian peasantry than in that of the ethnically Polish peasantry, or, for example, the Catholic peasantry of Lithuania. But he did not believe that it was impossible: he thought it only necessary to develop Polish education in the Ukrainian territories and to introduce true equality of Roman Catholics, Uniates, and the Orthodox before the law. From his viewpoint, it was *the duty* of Polish patriots to carry out this task—their duty not only to themselves, but also, and indeed above all, to all potential Poles, even if as yet they spoke a language other than Polish.

Today we are well aware that these were illusions. Greater illusions than in the period of the Great Sejm, for it was one thing to introduce a program of modernization of a multilingualistic "political nation" within the framework of existing state frontiers and quite another thing to win over the non-Polish population to Polishness in the absence of independence. For Kosciuszko's generation this was an almost indiscernible difference. Their illusions were in a certain essential sense historically inevitable and we cannot judge them purely from the perspective of our own period.

It is however worth considering how the Enlightenment concept of the Polish nation, including Kosciuszko's own

concept, relates to the concepts generally accepted today, both in the popular consciousness and various forms of writing—from *belles lettres* and essays to academic literature.

In the modern Polish language, the concept of the nation has been clearly depoliticized: nationality is today clearly distinguished from citizenship of a given state. This distinction is emphasized both by the citizens themselves and by the state authorities: in all official documents "Polish citizenship" is differentiated from "Polish nationality," which assumes that one may be a Polish citizen, while, if one wishes, retaining non-Polish nationality. In the countries of Western Europe and the English-speaking world things are, as we know, different. There the word "nation" has a strong political connotation; in official language, "nationality" in English or "nationalité" in French denotes citizenship of a given state, irrespective of the language or ethnic origin of a particular individual, or even of the way that the individual describes himself. A Ukrainian or Pole living in the United States or Australia defines his nationality for his own purposes as Ukrainian or Polish, but he knows that his American or Australian citizenship obliges him to describe himself in official documents as an American or Australian. It is the same in France: any attempt to divide French citizens into Frenchmen and people of different nationality would be treated as discrimination, incompatible with the principles of democracy. In Poland, however, and also in other countries of East-Central and Eastern Europe, it would be considered an infringement of civil rights to ignore the above distinction and to classify national minorities as Poles, Czechs, or Hungarians. This results from the fact that the modern nations of Eastern and Central Europe were formed on an ethno-linguistic basis at a time when they lacked their own statehood and were constantly under threat from "nation-states." This is what lay at the bottom of Hans Kohn's typology, which has been examined critically above. This typology was mistaken in its total failure to take into account one further important fact: namely, that in prepartition Poland, which

was after all the largest state in this part of Europe, the concept of the nation was shaped as a *political*, and not an ethno-linguistic, category, and thus *in the same way* as in Western Europe; and that it changed not as a result of any internal process, but as a result of the Poles being deprived of their statehood. From the moment when Poland was placed under the yoke of foreign powers, the identification of statehood with nationality ceased to be possible, for it would have meant that Poles were to turn into Germans or Russians. This was unthinkable for a nation with a high level of national consciousness and it thus became necessary to abandon the political concept of the nation. This however entailed consequences which the Poles had not foreseen, and which for a long period they did not wish to accept, for it accelerated and in its own way validated the process of "ethnic awakening" among the non-Polish population of the former Commonwealth, and next the process of their forming into separate nations which defined themselves through their opposition to Polishness. But if the Poles on losing their statehood did not abandon their national aspirations and were not content with the status of an ethnic minority within the framework of other states, why then should Ukrainians or Lithuanians not have entertained aspirations of the same kind? In this situation, it would have been much stranger to demand that the Lithuanian and Ukrainian inhabitants of the former Commonwealth should define themselves as Poles. And yet expectations of precisely this kind, which appear "strange" from today's point of view, did not seem strange to the generation of Kollataj * and Kosciuszko. Their belief in the durability of the links binding the lands of the former Commonwealth was so profound, and the cultural and political ascendancy of the Polish population was so evident to them, that the polonization of the ethnically non-Polish population of these areas was in their view only a question of introducing general education (of course, in Polish), the social emancipation of the peasantry, and the weakening of divisive religious fanaticism.

Later generations, brought up under the influence of a Romantic culture which valued variety, often dreamed (although as I have pointed out, this did not become the predominant attitude on a mass scale) of a multilinguistic and multicultural Poland. This did not however mean that they abandoned the political concept of the nation: both the centralist levelers and the "*avant la lettre* multiculturalists" rejected the reduction of Poland to frontiers dictated by ethno-linguistic criteria and aimed to restore Poland as a political community within its 1772 boundaries. *At that time* aspirations of this kind were not an expression of rapacity, and for a long period to come they surprised almost no one. Wiktor Sukiennicki in his last book (published posthumously) pointed out that even the signatories to the Treaty of Vienna, when they wrote of guarantees for the rights of Poles outside the frontiers of the Kingdom of Poland, had used the name "Poles" to refer to the whole population of the former Commonwealth.⁵⁸ The European radical left long continued—up to the period of the First International—to demand the resuscitation of Poland within her prepartition frontiers. This was stated in the strongest terms by Engels, who argued that support for Polish aspirations to independence had nothing in common with "the nationality principle": for Poland (and this was Marx's view also) was not only a "nationality" (that is, an ethno-linguistic community), but a "nation" (*Nation*, as opposed to *Nationalität*)—one of "the great historic nations of Europe," made up of at least four ethnic "nationalities."⁵⁹

Engels' support for the restoration of historical Poland was thus combined with an outspoken refusal to acknowledge the right of self-determination by Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Belorussians. In his view "historical nations" (like Poland) *had* the right to separate and independent existence while ethnic "nonhistorical" nationalities did not have such a right, because separatism contradicted the centralist tendency of progress. This conclusion strikes us today as wholly untenable, but it is important to realize that the distinction between "historical nations" and ethnic nationalities was not

completely groundless. It was a rather obvious fact that nineteenth-century Poles represented a different type of nation than Ruthenians (Ukrainians) or ethnic Lithuanians. Józef Chlebowski, a prematurely deceased Polish historian (whose excellent work on the nationalities question in East-Central Europe is available in English but still too little known in the West) explained this difference in terms of the following typology:

In the typological sense, the national communities and the linguistic and ethnic groups existing in East-Central Europe on the eve of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of the Springtime of Nations can be classified as follows:

1. ruling nations (nations having their own states),
2. fully shaped political nations with a complete social structure but lacking their own institutionalized forms of existence as states and nations,
3. linguistic-ethnic groups and nationalities, mostly plebeian (with incomplete social structure), which were only just coming within the orbit of nation-forming processes.⁶⁰

Unlike the Poles, the other nationalities of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth belonged to the third of these categories. At Kosciuszko's time they were represented neither by their own "historical classes" (since their nobility had long become polonized), nor by "high culture" in their own languages. Hence for the theorists of the Polish Enlightenment it was only natural to see them as potential Poles. But this was a mistake, although an excusable one. Like other so-called "nonhistorical peoples" of the East-Central Europe, the non-Polish nationalities of prepartition Poland were to create their own intelligentsias and to pass through the many-staged process of "national awakening." This most interesting and important process was analyzed by Otto Bauer, a leading Austrian Marxist who used Engels' distinction between "historical" and "nonhistorical" nations,

but, in contrast to Engels, sympathized with the national strivings of the plebeian, "nonhistorical" peoples and endorsed their historical legitimacy.⁶¹ The Polish independence movement, as well as Polish cultural nationalism, particularly as expressed in the Polish literature of the Romantic epoch, played the role of an important catalyst in this process, especially (though not exclusively) on the territories of the former Commonwealth. But, somewhat ironically, the results of the general "national awakening" in East-Central Europe had to come into conflict with the historic claims of the Polish patriots. For a long time Polish landlords were unaware of this and often assumed patronizing attitudes towards the early manifestations of Lithuanian or Ukrainian cultural nationalism, seeing them as merely interesting specimens of a regional *peasant* culture. They did not suspect that these peasant cultures would develop into national cultures, defining their identity in opposition to Polishness, and providing a stepping-stone for political aspirations.

In the case of Ukrainians, this had already been discernible in 1848; in the case of the Lithuanians, who still at the time of the 1863 insurrection willingly and in large numbers joined with the Polish insurrectionaries, this "national awakening" took place only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But whether we in the twentieth century—and more particularly in the late twentieth century—like it or not, there can no longer be any doubt that over the whole territory of Central and Eastern Europe, new nations were taking shape on an ethno-linguistic-cultural basis, not on a historic-political basis, and that the Poles, despite their different point of departure, did not constitute an exception in this respect. In the case of Czesław Miłosz or Wiktor Sukiennicki and other eminent representatives of the older generation from Wilno, nostalgia for the old Jagiellonian community of nations is completely understandable and rather likable. The younger generation of Poles should however realize that all attempts to resurrect the "Jagiellonian idea"—even in its noblest form, inspired by Lelewel and Mickiewicz, and even

if only a federative or confederative union of nations is proposed—usually provoke the opposite reaction from that intended: that is, a justifiable suspicion among the Poles' eastern neighbors, and megalomania and unhealthy ambitions to leadership among the Poles themselves.

The gradual acceptance of the ethno-linguistic concept of the Polish nation was a process which took place only in the second half of the nineteenth century. The ideas of Dmowski and other ideologists of the National Democratic party provided the theoretical expression of its acceptance. Admittedly, they did not abandon claims to ethnically non-Polish territories, but they made these claims in the belief that the population of those territories could be completely assimilated thanks to the political and cultural ascendancy of the Poles. On the surface this was in line with the standpoint of the progressive political thinkers of the Enlightenment, but this apparent coincidence of views is misleading. The Enlightenment advocates of unification, of the "Jacobin" concept of the nation, defined nations in a political way and were therefore able to put forward a program of assimilation *in good faith*, in the name of the universal values of progress, without being aware that this implied a violation of the rights of other nationalities. On the contrary, they were at the same time advocates of the idea of justice in international relations, an ethical code in politics, and the rights of all nations to self-determination. The National Democrats on the other hand were able to put forward a program of assimilation only in the name of totally undisguised "national egoism" and social Darwinism, completely aware that *from the viewpoint of their own criteria*, the Ukrainian, Belorussian, or Lithuanian populations were not Polish, even if they themselves were not yet aware of this fact.

Viewed from this perspective, the Enlightenment concept of the Polish nation must be seen as an immeasurably important historical document. It indicates that at that time the process of forming a modern Polish nation was taking place in Poland along lines similar to those followed in the

countries of Western Europe and that the course of this process changed under pressure of external circumstances: the partitions of Poland. Having reached this conclusion, we must reflect on its consequences. For it seems possible to substantiate the hypothesis that if prepartition Poland had survived within the existing, or slightly reduced, state boundaries, and if the Enlightenment reforms, which also covered the integration of Lithuania and the linguistic homogenization of the state on the French model, had been crowned with success—which, if independent statehood had been retained and a sensible domestic policy pursued, would have been perfectly possible—the whole process of forming modern nationalities in the area of Central and Eastern Europe would have proceeded differently.

Lord Acton seems to have been right in stressing that the partitions of Poland undermined the hitherto existing system of political legitimacy and thus paved the way for "the theory of nationality" as an entirely new legitimizing device, with all its fatal consequences for "the ancient European system." ⁶² However, it does not fall within the scope of the present study to examine this idea further.

Kosciuszko occupies a particularly prominent place among the greatest figures of the Polish Enlightenment, and therefore his views on the national question, expressed in both words and actions, deserve especial attention. This polonized Belorussian who saw his native land as a part of Lithuania was a fervent Polish patriot and by choice a hardly less fervent American patriot. In contrast with the National Democratic ideologists, he never identified Polishness, with "Latin civilization," and he did not treat Poland as an eastern bastion of that civilization: he saw her rather as a *bridge* between East and West. But despite this, his concept of the nation was par excellence Western, whereas the concepts of the National Democrats, which took shape a hundred years later, were a product of the sad specifics of Eastern Europe: national oppression, economic backwardness, and ethnic conflicts. Kosciuszko was not a proponent of the Romantic vision of a multilingualistic

nation but, on the contrary, advocated a policy of linguistic and cultural polonization. At the same time, however, he found narrow "national egoism" intolerable; he believed in the international brotherhood of peoples and fought for Poland in the name of universal ideals: those same ideals that had been proclaimed by the American and French revolutions. He was therefore entirely deserving of the words addressed to him by Thomas Jefferson: "Your principles and dispositions were made to be honored, revered and loved. True to a single object, the freedom and happiness of man, they have not veered about with the changelings and apostates of our acquaintance." 63

**Appendix—
Kosciuszko * in English Poetry:
Three Sonnets**

S.T. Coleridge
KOSCIUSKO

O what a loud and fearful shriek was there,
 As though a thousand souls one death-groan pour'd!
 Ah me! they view'd beneath an hireling's sword
Their Kosciusko fall! Through the swart air

(As pauses the tired Cossac's barbarous yell
 Of Triumph) on the chill and midnight gale
 Rises with frantic burst or sadder swell
The dirge of murder'd Hope! while Freedom pale

Bends in such anguish o'er her destin'd bier,
 As if from eldest time some Spirit meek
 Had gather'd in a mystic urn each tear
That ever on a Patriot's furrow'd cheek

Fit channel found,—and she had drain'd the bowl
In the mere wilfulness, and sick despair of soul!

Dated 1794.

John Keats
TO KOSCIUSKO

Good Kosciusko! thy great name alone
Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling;
It comes upon us like the glorious pealing
Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,
The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,
And change to harmonies, for ever stealing
Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.
It tells me too, that on a happy day,
When some good spirit walks upon the earth,
Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
To where the great God lives for evermore.

Dated 1816.

Leigh Hunt
TO KOSCIUSKO,

WHO NEVER FOUGHT EITHER FOR BONAPARTE OR THE ALLIES

'Tis like thy patient valour thus to keep,
Great Kosciusko, to the rural shade,
While Freedom's ill-found amulet still is made
Pretence for old aggression, and a heap
Of selfish mockeries. There, as in the sweep
Of stormier fields, thou earnest with thy blade,
Transform'd, not inly alter'd, to the spade,
Thy never yielding right to a calm sleep.

There came a wanderer, borne from land to land
Upon a couch, pale many-wounded, mild,
His brow with patient pain dulcetly sour.
Men stoop'd with awful sweetness on his hand,
And kiss'd it; and collected Virtue smiled,
To think how sovereign her enduring hour.

The last six lines added to this sonnet are explained as follows: "The author heard Mrs. West (the artist's wife) very agreeably say,—'The Duke of Bedford came in while my husband was painting Kosciusko's portrait. He stooped down upon the General's hand as he reclined on the sofa, and kissed it; *and I fell in love with him*'—This was Francis, fifth Duke of Bedford, whose statue is in Russell Square."

The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt, Boston, 1857, vol. 2, p. 315.

Notes

Preface

1. A. Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford, 1982), p. 2.
2. See below, pp. 4–6.
3. For the distinction between "historical nations" and "nonhistorical peoples" see below, pp. 121–23.
4. N. Davies, *Poland, Past and Present: A Select Bibliography of Works in English* (Newtonville, Mass., 1977), p. xv. The author's intention was to provide a comprehensive guide to works in English, both books and articles. Works in other languages were included "only when nothing comparable in English was available."
5. See *ibid.*, pp. 74–82. Among the seventeen items dealing with the cultural and intellectual history of the Polish Enlightenment, eight (including two books by J. M. Fabre and two books by A. Jobert) are in French. The remaining nine items are in English, but two of them are written by Polish scholars.

Among English-speaking authors, the only genuine specialist in the intellectual history of the Polish Enlightenment was the Canadian scholar William J. Rose (1885–1969). He wrote the book *Stanislaw Konarski, Reformer of Education in Eighteenth Century Poland* (London, 1919) and informative articles on Hugo Kollataj * and Stanislaw Staszic (See Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 80).
6. See R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800* (Princeton, N.J., 1959), vol. 1, pp. 411–435 and vol. 2, pp. 146–156.
7. It seems proper to mention in this connection the Second Conference of Polish and American Historians, an American bicentennial event which took place at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, September 29 to October 1, 1976, under the joint auspices of the Polish

Academy of Sciences, the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw, and the Department of History of the University of Iowa. The proceedings of this conference have been published as a separate book, *The American and European Revolutions, 1776–1848: Sociopolitical and Ideological Aspects*, ed. Jarosław Pelenski, (Iowa City, 1980).

8. Cf. Palmer, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 429–430.

9. See the Appendix p. 127.

1—

The Noble Republicanism of the Age of Enlightenment

1. I am thinking here primarily of the studies by J. Tazbir and J. Maciejewski, which I cite below.

2. Cf. J. Szacki, *Ojczyzna, naród, rewolucja* (Warsaw, 1962), pp. 38–42. On this matter, Szacki cites the work of the British historian, A. Cobban, *Rousseau and the Modern State* (London, 1934).

3. In Western European and American literature, the term "nationalism" usually denotes all those ideologies and social movements which aim to strengthen or create national bonds, to awaken or shape the national consciousness, to develop the cultural identity of their own nation, or to recover political independence. Nationalism in the narrow and pejorative sense—that is the ideology of national egoism or chauvinism—is normally described as "integral nationalism."

4. In A. D. Smith's book, *Theories of Nationalism* (London, 1971), p. 107, we read: "One can indeed claim that nationalism is one of the most convincing collective realisations of the principles of the Enlightenment."

5. Cf. the entry under "Nationalism," by H. Kohn in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 11, 1968, p. 64: "As a phenomenon of modern European history, nationalism is closely linked with the origins of popular sovereignty."

6. Cf. F. Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (Munich, 1919), 1st ed. 1908.

7. Cf. R. Dmowski, *Problems of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, July 1917), pp. 17–19. A Polish translation of this brochure was included as an appendix to Dmowski's book, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa* * (Warsaw, 1923).

8. A. Cobban's book, *National Self-Determination* (London and

New York, 1945), contains biting criticism of the principle of national self-determination. This book was published in a new edition entitled *The Nation-State and National Self-Determination* (New York, 1970).

9. This theory has been systematized on the basis of Kohn's many studies by Louis L. Snyder in his book, *The Meaning of Nationalism*. Foreword by H. Kohn (New Brunswick, N.J., 1954), pp. 118–120. The Finnish scholar Aira Kemiläinen devoted a considerable part of her book entitled *Nationalism: Problems Concerning the Word, the Concept and Classification* (Iväsyla, 1964), to a critical analysis of "Kohn's dichotomy." That "Kohn's dichotomy" is still considered to be the most important contemporary attempt at a typology of nationalism is indicated for example by Heinrich Winkler's critical, if overly mild, remarks on the subject in his paper entitled "Der Nationalismus und seine Funktionen." See *Nationalismus*, Herausgegeben von Heinrich August Winkler (Königstein, 1978), pp. 7–10.
10. It is worth noting that in later years of his life, Kohn somewhat modified this theory, claiming that English nationalism alone was a really "good" nationalism. H. Kohn, *Prelude to Nation States: The French and German Experience, 1789–1815* (Princeton, N.J., 1967), p. 300.
11. Cf. B. Lesnodorski *, *Dzielo Sejmu czteroletniego* (Wrocław, 1951), p. 18. The author rightly points out that "this was an absolutely unique phenomenon."
12. Cf. J. Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka w Polsce*, (Warsaw, 1978), p. 56.
13. Cf. F. Meinecke, op. cit., chapter 1.
14. H. Kohn, *Prelude*, p. 121.
15. The possibility that the Sejm could be broken off and all its statutes invalidated through the action of one deputy served to prevent polarization of opinions, since it forced the members to seek solutions which would be acceptable to all. Moreover, it counteracted separatist tendencies, which would inevitably have arisen in such a large and internally differentiated state if the individual provinces had reason to fear that their specific interests would be ignored by the parliamentary majority. Cf. Z. Ogonowski, "W obronie Liberum Veto. Nad pismami Andrzeja Maksymiliana Fredry" in *Człowiek i Światopogląd**, no. 4 (1975).
16. Cf. J. Tazbir, op. cit., p. 59.
17. J. Maciejewski, "Pojęcie* narodu w myśli* republikantów lat

1767–1775" in *Idee i koncepcje narodu w polskiej myśli * politycznej czasów porzobiorowch*, ed. J. Gockowski* and A. Walicki (Warsaw, 1977), pp. 25–26.

18. J. S. Kopczewski, *Casimir Pulaski* (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 107 and 109–110.

19. See above, note 1. For a different view, stressing the narrow-minded conservatism of the confederates, see J. Michalski, "Mentalność* polityczna konfederatów barskich" in *Przemiany tradycji barskiej*, ed. by Z. Stefanowska (Kraków, 1972), pp. 7–27.

20. The text of the oath sworn by the Bar confederates reads as follows: "I swear to God the Father of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Virgin Mary and all the saints, to the patron saints of the Polish Crown and to you, the Pope in Rome and the head of the Church that I shall keep faith with this holy conspiracy to defend the Roman Catholic religion and shall not tell anyone, either male or female, even the most trusted friend, of the members, meeting places or any light-minded acts and shall not leave the Roman Catholic faith and shall defend it with heart and sword to my dying day, until it has been saved and firmly established in my country. . . ." (Quoted from J. S. Kopczewski, op. cit., pp. 18–19). This programmatic and somewhat fanatic commitment to Roman Catholicism sharply distinguishes the Bar Confederation from Kosciuszko's uprising. The Confederates were fighting *Pro fide et libertate* while the aim of Kosciuszko's insurrection was defined in purely political terms: as "liberty, integrity (of the national territory) and independence."

21. See Maciejewski, "Pojęcie* narodu," p. 34. Cf. also J. Maciejewski, "Geneza i charakter ideologii republikantów 1767–1775," *Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej*, no. 17, 1971.

22. See the essays of M. Janion, M. Zmigrodzka*, Z. Stefanowska, and S. Treugutt in *Przemiany tradycji barskiej*.

For the same reason, the songs of the Confederation became popular among the activists of the Polish opposition at the end of 1970s. The author of this book vividly remembers the performance of one of those songs ("I stand on parade as God has bidden") by Seweryn Blumstein, in the apartment of Jan Józef Lipski, the co-founder of KOR (Committee for the Defence of the Workers). The fact that the Confederates were devoted Catholics while Blumstein and Lipski were agnostics in religious matters was felt as completely irrelevant.

23. M. Wielhorski, *O przywróceniu dawnego rządu* według* pierwsiotkowych Rzeczypospolitej Ustaw* (n.p., 1775), p. 1.

24. In the eighteenth-century sense, the word "government" was used to mean "system of government."
25. M. Wielhorski, op. cit., pp. 44–45.
26. Ibid., pp. 5–6.
27. W. Smolenski *, *Szkoły* historyczne w Polsce* (Wrocław, 1952), p. 51.
28. M. Wielhorski, op. cit., p. 305.
29. J. Maciejewski, "Pojecie* narodu," p. 38.
30. Ibid.
31. M. Wielhorski, op. cit., p. 226.
32. Ibid., p. 300.
33. J. Michalski, *Rousseau i sarmacki republikanizm* (Warsaw, 1977), p. 88.
34. Ibid., p. 99.
35. Cf. J. J. Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, translated and introduced by W. Kendall (Indianapolis and New York, 1972), p. 30.
36. S. Rzewuski, *O sukcesji tronu w Polsce rzecz krótka* (Warsaw 1789), p. 25.
37. Ibid., p. 45.
38. Ibid., p. 10.
39. Ibid., pp. 31–33.
40. Ibid., p. 15.
41. M. Szyjkowski, *Mysł* J. J. Rousseau w Polsce XVIII wieku* (Kraków, 1913), p. 157.
42. *Adama Wawrzynca* Rzewuskiego, kasztelana witebskiego, o formie rządu* republikańskiego* myśli** (Warsaw, 1790), vol. 1, p. 41.
43. Ibid., pp. 49–50.
44. Ibid., p. 61.
45. Ibid., p. 70.
46. Ibid., p. 72.
47. Cf. J. Tazbir, *Rzeczpospolita szlachecka wobec wielkich odkryc** (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 203–204.
48. A. W. Rzewuski, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 74.
49. Ibid., pp. 92–93.
50. Ibid., pp. 100–101.
51. Ibid., p. 132.
52. Ibid., p. 168.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 107.
55. Ibid., pp. 36–37.

56. Ibid., pp. 6–7.
57. Ibid., pp. 147–148.
58. Ibid., pp. 89–90.
59. Ibid., pp. 73–74. Italics mine.
60. B. Lesnodorski *, op. cit., p. 359.
61. A. W. Rzewuski, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 117.
62. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 111–112.
63. Ibid., p. 117.
64. As quoted in A. Próchnik, *Demokracja Kosciuszkowska** (Warsaw, 1946), p. 37.
65. W. Turski, *Mysli* o królach, o sukcesji, o przeszłym i przyszłym rządzie** (Warsaw, 1790), p. 10.
66. Ibid., p. 7.
67. Ibid., p. 19.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p. 23.
70. Ibid., pp. 26–27.
71. W. Turski, *Odpowiedz* na dzieło* K. Hugona Kollataja*, Referendarza W.K. Lit., Uwagi nad pismem etc.* (Warsaw, 1790). The pages of this brochure are not numbered.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. *Wojciecha Turskiego nawrócenie sie* polityczne* (n.p., 1792), pages not numbered.
76. As quoted in A. Próchnik, op. cit., p. 66.
77. Ibid.
78. As quoted in B. Lesnodorski, op. cit., p. 19.
79. Cf. A Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 145 and 157.
80. Ibid., pp. 17 and 65.
81. M. Szykowski, op. cit., p. 102.
82. Cf. J. Fabre, "Stanislas Leszczyński et l'idée républicaine en France au XVIIIe siècle," in J. Fabre, *Lumières et romantisme* (Paris, 1962), pp. 131–149.
83. As quoted in M. Handelsman, *Rozwój narodowości* nowoczesnej* (Warsaw, 1924), p. 217. The statute of the Society was called "presocial" because it was the product "of the will of certain citizens secretly gathered together, and not of the will of society as a whole, which could not be evinced at a time when the community was dissolved." Ibid., p. 209.

2—

The Enlightenment Concept of the Law of Nations

1. This is L. Etllich's expression. Cf. L. Etllich, *Paweł Włodkowic i Stanisław ze Skarbimierza* (Warsaw, 1954).
2. Cf. J. Tazbir, *Panstwo * bez stosów* (Warsaw, 1967), pp. 33–34. This book has been translated into English: J. Tazbir, *A State Without Stakes* (New York: Kosciuszko Foundation, 1973).
3. Cf. W. Voise, *Frycza Modrzewskiego nauka o panstwie* i prawie* (Warsaw, 1956), p. 257.
4. S. Hubert, *Poglad* na prawo narodów w Polsce czasów Oswiecenia** (Wrocław, 1960).
5. A. Popławski*, *Zbiór niektórych materii politycznych* (Warsaw, 1774), pp. 275–277.
6. H. Stroynowski, *Nauka prawa przyrodzonego, politycznego, ekonomiki politycznej i prawa narodów* (Wilno, 1791), part 4, §3, as quoted by S. Hubert, pp. 71–72.
7. As quoted by S. Hubert, p. 76.
8. H. Kollataj*, I. Potocki, F. K. Dmochowski, *O ustanowieniu i upadku konstytucji 3 maja 1791 roku*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1868), vol. 1, pp. 3–6.
9. See, for example, A. W. Rzewuski's phrase, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 92: "What man renders unto man, and citizen unto citizen, that same should be rendered by nation unto nation."
10. This is stressed by S. Hubert, op. cit., p. 48.
11. Ibid.
12. H. Stroynowski, op. cit., part 4, §5, as quoted by S. Hubert, op. cit., p. 87.
13. J. Tazbir, *Rzeczpospolita szlachecka wobec wielkich odkryc**, p. 203.
14. Ibid., pp. 179–186.
15. Ibid., p. 198.
16. S. Hubert, op. cit., p. 253. Cf. also p. 15.
17. Cf. Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns*, translated by Charles G. Fenwick (Washington, 1916), p. 12.
18. F. S. Jezierski, *Wybór pism*, ed. Z. Skwarczynski* (Warsaw, 1952), pp. 217–218. Jezierski also gave the example of the Germans, whom he treated as one great nation even though it did not

possess "national significance like that of France, Spain, Moscow, and others."

19. A. J. Czartoryski, *Essai sur la diplomatie: Manuscrit d'un philhellène publié par M. Toulouzan* (Paris-Marseille, 1830), pp. 185–190.

20. Cf. M. Handelsman, op. cit., pp. 137–140.

21. Cf. J. Skowronek, *Antynapoleonskie * koncepcje Czartoryskiego* (Warsaw, 1969), pp. 48–53. See also M. Kukiel, *Czartoryski and European Unity, 1770–1861* (Princeton, N.J., 1955), ch. 3. The text of Czartoryski's memoir is published in A. J. Czartoryski, *Pamiętniki* i memorialy* polityczne*, ed. J. Skowronek (Warsaw, 1986).

22. See A. Cieszkowski, *Ojcie Nasz*. Selections from this *magnum opus* of the greatest philosopher of the Polish Romanticism are available in English in *Selected Writings of August Cieszkowski*, edited, translated and introduced by André Liebich (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 107–155.

3—

Stanisław Staszic

1. J. J. Rousseau, op. cit., p. 19.

2. S. Staszic, *Pisma filozoficzne i społeczne**, ed. B. Suchodolski (Warsaw, 1954), vol. 1, p. 20.

3. Ibid., pp. 28–29.

4. Ibid., p. 22.

5. Ibid., p. 31.

6. Ibid., p. 30.

7. Ibid., p. 33.

8. Ibid., p. 227.

9. Ibid., p. 34.

10. Ibid., p. 33.

11. Ibid., p. 303.

12. Ibid., p. 45.

13. Ibid., pp. 39–40.

14. Ibid., p. 43.

15. Ibid., p. 44.

16. Cf. M. Klimowicz, *Oswiecenie** (Warsaw, 1972), p. 325. Contrary to Klimowicz's views, Staszic did not feel "a contradiction between his enlightened republicanism and the requirements of the time," but rather the growing contradiction between his enlightened absolutism

and the habits of the Polish nobility. E. Rostworowski also treats Staszic's "republicanism" too seriously. Cf. E. Rostworowski, *Ostatni król Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 1966), p. 117.

17. S. Staszic, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 269.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 91.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., pp. 43–44.

22. Ibid., p. 44.

23. Ibid., pp. 210–211.

24. Ibid., p. 274.

25. F. S. Jezierski, *Wybór pism*, p. 215.

26. S. Staszic, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 165.

27. Ibid., p. 175.

28. Ibid., p. 147.

29. Ibid., pp. 215–217.

30. Ibid., p. 253.

31. Ibid., p. 322.

32. Ibid., pp. 251–252.

33. Ibid., pp. 328–329.

34. Ibid., p. 180.

35. Ibid., p. 41.

36. Ibid., p. 296.

37. Ibid., p. 343. It is worth pointing out that Staszic, in spite of the republican declarations with which he began *Przestrogi dla Polski* was here trying to convince the Polish nobility of the necessity of "a hereditary monarch from a sovereign family in Europe" (p. 314), while in the *Comments* he was suggesting to them a program with a seym in permanent session and an elected Polish monarch. 38. Ibid., p. 315, footnote.

38. Ibid., p. 315, footnote.

39. Ibid.

40. As we know, in the old Poland, Jews were protected by the kings and nobility, while antisemitic sentiments were prevalent among the burghers and clergy. Cf. Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed., vol. 17: *Poland-Lithuania, 1500–1650* (New York-London, 1976).

41. Cf. S. Staszic, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 298–303.

42. See above, p. 21.

43. S. Staszic, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 212.

44. Cf. ibid, vol. 2, pp. 276–278.

45. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 5.
46. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 31.
47. Cf. S. Staszic, *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa* (The human race: Draft version), ed. Z. Daszkowski (Warsaw, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 88–92.
48. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 11.
49. Ibid., p. 39.
50. Ibid., p. 40.
51. Ibid., p. 98.
52. Cf. ibid., p. 196, and *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa*, vol. 3, p. 224.
53. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 80.
54. Cf. ibid., p. 197, and *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa*, vol. 3, p. 225.
55. Ibid.
56. Cf. ibid., p. 210 and *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa*, vol. 3, p. 286. I am quoting from the draft version, since it is twenty years earlier than the printed version. See S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 342. In the printed *Comments on "The Human Race,"* it is not only the nobility that is under discussion, but also the exclusive nature of two estates: the nobility and the clergy. However, in speaking of the nobility, he left out the adjective "demented."
57. Cf. *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 211, and *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa*, vol. 3, pp. 287–288.
58. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, pp. 105–106.
59. Ibid., p. 114.
60. Ibid., p. 125.
61. Ibid., p. 145.
62. Ibid., p. 147.
63. Ibid., p. 120.
64. Ibid., p. 156.
65. Ibid.
66. Cf. M. H. Serejski, *Europa a rozbiory Polski* (Warsaw, 1970), parts 5 and 6. The view that Poland's fall was due to lack of absolutism and the oppression by the nobility of the third estate was also voiced by F. Guizot.
67. Cf. *Pisma*, vol. 2, pp. 201–203, and *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa*, vol. 3, pp. 270–271. I am using the draft version because it is earlier and because in it Staszic's views are more forcibly stated.
68. S. Staszic, *Ród ludzki: Wersja brulionowa*, vol. 3, p. 172.
69. C. Backvis, "Quelques observations à propos du rapport de B.

Suchodolski sur le mouvement des idées en Pologne pendant la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle" in *Le mouvement des idées dans les pays slaves pendant la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle: Collana di "Ricerca Slavistica,"* no. 2 (G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1962), p. 129.

70. Ibid., p. 131.

71. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, pp. 277–278.

72. Letter from Szczesny * Potocki to S. Rzewuski dated 4.I.1796. Quoted from E. Rostworowski, "Korespondencja Szczesnego* Potockiego z Sewerynem Rzewuskim z lat 1788–1796," *Przegląd* Historyczny*, vol. 45 (1954), p. 740.

73. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 290.

74. Ibid., p. 292.

75. Ibid., p. 299.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., p. 300.

78. Ibid., p. 223.

79. K. Kozmian*, *Pamiętniki** part 5 (Warsaw, 1907), p. 79.

80. Ibid., p. 321.

81. Ibid., p. 321.

82. S. Staszic, *Dziela** (Warsaw, 1816–1820), vol. 9, p. 189 (*Ród ludzki*, canto XVIII).

83. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 318.

84. J. Ujejski analyzes this in *Dzieje mesjanizmu polskiego do powstania listopadowego włącznie** (Lvov, 1931), pp. 143–166.

85. S. Staszic, *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 173.

86. Ibid., p. 174.

87. Ibid.

88. See J. U. Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich*, (Leipzig, 1868), p. 322.

89. B. Szacka, *Teoria i utopia Stanisława* Staszica* (Warsaw, 1965), p. 97. There can be no doubt that this definition of the nation appears in Staszic's writings although basically it is far more characteristic of representatives of the republican trend.

4—

Hugo Kollataj*

1. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima i Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego*, ed. B. Lesnodorski and H. Wereszycka (Warsaw, 1954), vol. 1, p. 296.

2. *Kuznica Kollatajowska* *: *Wybór źródeł*, ed. B. Lesnodorski* (Wrocław, 1949), pp. 80–83 (from Kollataj's* brochure *O sukcesji tronu i innych sprawach najważniejszych**).
3. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, pp. 352–353.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 47.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
10. There is an excellent analysis of these concepts in I. Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* (Oxford, 1958).
11. Cf. B. Lesnodorski, op. cit., p. 149, and K. Zienkowska, *Ślawetni* i urodzeni: Ruch polityczny mieszczaństwa* w dobie Sejmu Czteroletniego* (Warsaw, 1976), pp. 111 and 117.
12. See A. W. Rzewuski's conceptions, discussed above.
13. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 2, p. 209.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 110 and 210.
15. Cf. E. Rostworowski, *Ostatni król Rzeczypospolitej*, pp. 197–198.
16. *O ustanowieniu i upadku konstytucji 3 maja 1791 roku* (see chap. 2, note 8), vol. 3, p. 66.
17. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, p. 296.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
19. On physiocracy in Poland, see J. Marchlewski, *Fizjokratyzm w Polsce* in *Pisma wybrane* (Warsaw, 1952), vol. 1; S. Grabski, *Zarys rozwoju idei społeczno-gospodarczych* w Polsce*, vol. 1 (Kraków, 1903); K. Opalek*, *Prawo natury u polskich fizjokratów* (Warsaw, 1953).
20. See E. Lipinski, *Studia nad historią polskiej myśli ekonomicznej* (Warsaw, 1956), p. 455.
21. H. Grynwasser, *Democracja szlachecka* (Warsaw, 1948, first published 1918), p. 15.
22. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, p. 281.
23. In *Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego*, part I, §6, Kollataj defended the enforcement of serfdom, writing that man could not "shirk what he had undertaken, on the pretext of personal liberty."
24. Cf. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, p. 340, and vol. 2, p. 308.
25. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 337.

26. Ibid., pp. 303–304.
27. As quoted by H. Kohn, *Prelude*, p. 21.
28. H. Kollataj *, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, p. 367.
29. Ibid., pp. 369–370.
30. Cf. B. Lesnodorski*, *Dzielo Sejmu czteroletniego*, pp. 235–240.
31. Quoted from H. Kohn, *Prelude*, p. 91. Cf. also Carlton J. H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York, 1931), p. 64.
32. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, p. 370.
33. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 246.
34. Ibid., p. 329.
35. Cf. H. Kohn, *Prelude*, pp. 36–39.
36. Cf. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 2, pp. 153–160.
37. T. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, selected, elucidated and furnished with an introduction by H. Moscicki* (Warsaw, 1947), p. 45.
38. Cf. Carlton J. H. Hayes, op. cit., p. 61.
39. Ibid., pp. 82–83.
40. Cf. H. Kollataj, *Listy Anonima*, vol. 1, pp. 211–212.
41. Ibid., p. 212.
42. Carlton J. H. Hayes, op. cit.
43. F. S. Jezierski, *Wybór pism*, p. 244.
44. Cf. A. F. Grabski, *Mysl* historyczna polskiego Oswiecenia* (Warsaw, 1976), p. 239.
45. *Kuznica* Kollatajowska**: *Wybór źródeł*, p. 62.
46. F. S. Jezierski, *Wybór pism*, p. 234.
47. Ibid., pp. 101–102.
48. F. S. Jezierski, *Rzepicha, matka królów, zona* Piasta* (Warsaw, 1790).
49. Cf. A. F. Grabski, op. cit., pp. 244–245.
50. F. S. Jezierski, *Wybór pism*, p. 89.
51. Lesnodorski*, *Polscy jakobini* (Warsaw, 1969), p. 361. Cf. The French translation: B. Lesnodorski, *Les Jacobins polonais* (Paris, 1965).
52. Ibid., pp. 273–284.
53. Ibid., p. 365.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 364.
56. H. Kollataj, *Porządek* fizyczno-moralny oraz Pomysły do dzieła Porządek fizyczny-moralny*, ed. K. Opalek (Warsaw, 1955), p. 355.
57. Ibid., p. 357.

58. Cf. *Dzieje folklorystyki polskiej 1800–1863* (The history of Polish folklore studies, 1800–1863), ed. H. Kapelus * and J. Krzyzanowski* (Wrocław 1970), p. 78 (the chapter by R. Wojciechowski).
59. Cf. J. Michalski, "Kollataj* a Warszawskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1951, no. 3–4.
60. Cf. A. F. Grabski, op. cit., p. 390.
61. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 391.
62. Cf. W. Tokarz, *Ostatnie lata Hugona Kollataja, 1794–1812* (Kraków, 1905), vol. 2. Kollotaj's* work is analyzed in J. Ujejski's book (cited in chapter 3 note 84), *Dzieje mesjanizmu polskiego*, chapter 5. From my own point of view, it is not justifiable to include Kollataj* and Staszic in the history of Polish messianism, and is based on an excessively broad understanding of the term "messianism." Cf. A. Walicki, *Filozofia a mesjanizm: Studia z dziejów filozofii i myśli* społeczno-religijnej romantyzmu polskiego* (Warsaw, 1970), pp. 15–2.
63. H. Kollataj, *Uwagi nad teraźniejszym* położeniem* tej części* ziemi polskiej, która od pokoju tylżyckiego* zaczęto* zwac* Księstwem* Warszawskim* (Leipzig, 2nd ed. 1810), part 1 (new pagination begins from chapter 5), pp. 106–107.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 115–116.
66. *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 7.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
68. *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 77. The argument used in favor of this statement was the fact that the kingdoms of Westphalia and Bavaria had no Senate, while the Duchy of Warsaw, like Spain and Italy, did have a Senate.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
70. *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 38.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–66.
72. *Ibid.*, part 1, pp. 132–136.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

5—

A Few Conclusions

1. It should be noted, however, that the Constitution of 1791 did not dare to be radical in this respect. It promised toleration to all religions but preserved the special position of Roman Catholicism. Its

creators wanted to avoid thereby an open conflict with conservative forces.

2. Cf. E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca and London, 1983), p. 138.

3. The enormous significance of the problem of the townspeople for Polish Enlightenment political thinking is brought out very clearly in K. Zienkowska's book, *Ślawetni * i urodzeni*, cited above.

4. The views of these thinkers, as well as of other Polish radical democrats of the Romantic epoch, are presented in A. Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford, 1982).

6—

The Legacy of the Enlightenment and Some New Dilemmas in the Political Thought of Tadeusz Kosciuszko

1. See J. Zuraw, *Mysl* filozoficzna i społeczna* Tadeusza Kosciuszki* (Warsaw, 1979), p. 26.

2. See above, p. 25.

3. See also, Z. Libiszowska, *Opinia polska wobec rewolucji amerykańskiej** (Łódź, 1962).

4. See M. K. Dziewanowski, "Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Kazimierz Pułaski, and the American War of Independence," in *The American and European Revolutions, 1776–1848*, ed. J. Pelenski (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1980), p. 127.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 128.

7. Quoted from M. Haiman, *Poland and the American Revolutionary War*, (Chicago, 1932), p. 21. Unfortunately, Thomas Jefferson refused to become the executor of Kosciuszko's will. It was put into execution only in 1826, when the first school for black people in the United States was founded using Kosciuszko's money. See *Memorial Exhibition: Thaddeus Kosciuszko, Revered Polish and American Hero*, the collection formed by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Kahanowicz (New York, n.d.), p. 43.

8. See above p. 10.

9. See *Akty powstania Kosciuszki* ed. S. Askenazy and W. Dzwonkowski (Kraków, 1918), vol. 1, p. xlviii.

10. J. Zuraw, op. cit., p. 159.

11. T. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, pp. 108–109.

12. In his discussion of the effects of the Polish-Lithuanian union, Professor J. Bardach draws attention to the Belorussian origins of Kosciuszko and Mickiewicz. "In evaluating the effects of the Jagiellonian union, it is necessary to take into account the fact that without it Polish culture would have been greatly impoverished, lacking those elements introduced by people who originated in the Lithuanian—Ruthene lands. Kosciuszko's patronymic comes from Kostia, the diminutive of the name Konstanty, while Mickiewicz's surname stems from a diminutive of Dymitri, Mit'ka." "Rozmowy o Litwinach i Polakach," *Res Publica*, no. 1, (June 1987), p. 101.

13. T. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, p. 163. Letter to J. Wybicki of August 22, 1798.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 168. Letter to Dubois-Crancé, the Minister of War, dated October 9, 1799.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 217, minutes of conversation between Kosciuszko and Minister Fouché at Berville in 1806.

18. T. Kosciuszko, "Memorial * do A. J. Czartoryskiego," *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, no. 4, 1965.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 899.

20. *Ibid.*

21. According to Adam Próchnik, the religious composition of the population of the Commonwealth was as follows: Roman Catholics, 53 percent; Uniates, 29.5 percent; Jews, 10.5 percent; Orthodox (disuniates), 3.4 percent; Protestants, 1.7 percent (A. Próchnik, *Demokracja Kosciuszkowska*, p. 13).

22. Cf. Abramowski, *Pisma publicystyczne w sprawach robotniczych i chlopskich* (Warsaw, 1938), p. 268. Abramowski, who was an eminent socialist thinker with anarcho-syndicalist leanings, believed that the program of reducing the country to its ethnographic boundaries was "an idea born of fear, and brought up by impotence and despair" (*ibid.*, p. 269). He argued that the fatherland had nothing in common with the ethno-linguistic community: "The fatherland is created by evolutionary means; by the history of peoples living together on the same land, and by constant intermingling of blood and spirit, by experiencing the same events of collective life, the same struggles, the same feelings, common hopes and joys, common defeats and sorrows. I have a fatherland because in my blood and at the bottom of my soul,

in the most secret recesses of the inner man, my ancestors are still alive—with their experiences and feelings, their ideals, their faith and their memory. And it is for this reason that peoples and tribes which even if they speak different languages have constantly intermingled through the ages and generations, and which have together lived through the same history, which have the same memories of the past preserved in their blood, always have one fatherland, and that fatherland is not for them something external, artificial, or imposed, or even merely a common state roof over their heads, but on the contrary, constitutes their own soul. . . . For an ethnographic Poland it would be necessary to create a new culture and a new soul. It would have neither history nor a past. Could a nation live with such a spiritual handicap?" Ibid., pp. 272–273.

These words, written in 1914, show how difficult it was for a Pole, especially one born in the eastern border regions, to accept the ethnolinguistic concept of the nation. This is all the more clearly demonstrated in that the author of the passage, who was a theoretician of "stateless socialism," could not be suspected of desiring a "Greatpower Poland."

23. J. Lelewel, *Mowy i pisma polityczne* (Poznan, 1864), p. 438. Lelewel took a somewhat different standpoint on the question of the Jews: "The Poles do not consider you to be foreigners, but fellowinhabitants. . . . Having lived and multiplied in the Polish lands for many centuries, you are natives of those lands until such time as the Messiah comes" (ibid., p. 259). It can be seen from the context that the words "until such time" were used only in order to avoid offending the religious sentiments of the Jewish community.

24. Cf. S. Pigon *, *Zreby* Nowej Polski w publikacjach Wielkiej Emigracji* (Warsaw, 1938). The following statement by J. B. Ostrowski, published in *Nowa Polska* in 1835 was an expression of this "Jacobin" standpoint: "The revival of Lithuanian or Ruthenian nationality is absurd, since it constitutes sedition against the historical and political unity of Poland" (ibid., p. 10).

25. See Lord Acton's essay "Nationality," in John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, *History of Freedom and Other Essays* (Freeport, N.Y., 1907), pp. 275–276.

26. There is also a new, critical edition of this brochure, edited and introduced by E. Halicz (Warsaw, 1967).

27. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, p. 171.

28. Ibid., pp. 197 and 202. An exaggerated faith in the sympathy

and assistance of the West was a permanent and typical feature of Polish "political idealism" throughout the post-partition period. Cf. A. Bromke, *The Meaning and Uses of Polish History* (Boulder, Colo., 1987), p. 35.

29. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, pp. 179–180.

30. Ibid., pp. 182–184.

31. W. Heltman, J. N. Janowski, *Demokracja Polska na emigracji* (Warsaw 1965), p. 211. Heltman's article, entitled "Pólsrodki," was originally published in Poitiers, 1837.

32. Ibid., p. 233, Heltman's article entitled "Powstanie 1794 roku," 1838.

33. K. Marks (Marx), *Przyczynki do historii kwestii polskiej: Rekopisy z lat 1863–1864* together with the original, entitled *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Polnischen Frage: Manuscripte aus den Jahren 1863–1864* (Warsaw 1971), pp. 152–53. (R. R. Palmer expressed a similar view. See his *Age of Democratic Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 433).

34. Marx, op. cit., pp. 154–155.

35. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, p. 102.

36. Cf. K. Sreniowska *, *Kosciuszko—bohater narodowy: Opinie współczesnych* i potomnych 1794–1846* (Warsaw, 1973), p. 21. See also E. Rostworowski in *History of Poland*, by A. Gieysztor, S. Kieniewicz, E. Rostworowski, J. Tazbir, and H. Wereszycki (Warsaw, 1969), p. 381.

37. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, pp. 105–106.

38. *Marks i Engels o Polsce* (Warsaw, 1960), vol. 2, p. 112 ("To the meeting in Geneva called to mark the 50th anniversary of the Polish Revolution of 1830").

39. J. Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*, ed. M. Cadot (Paris, 1968), pp. 10–11.

40. Cf. K. Sreniowska, op. cit., pp. 14–17.

41. Cf. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, pp. 101, 103, 120.

42. Ibid., p. 147.

43. A. Próchnik, op. cit., p. 153.

44. J. Michelet, op. cit., p. 11.

45. Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, p. 157.

46. Ibid., p. 159. The circumstances in which Kosciuszko was released from the Peter and Paul Fortress and left Russia have been described in detail by J. Dihm in his book *Kosciuszko nieznany* (Wrocław, 1969).

47. See above, p. 28.

48. See Kosciuszko, *Pisma*, pp. 218–228.

49. Ibid., pp. 228–229.

50. Ibid., p. 228.

51. Ibid., p. 229.

52. Ibid., p. 231.

53. Ibid., p. 232.

54. Ibid., pp. 242–243.

55. Ibid., p. 245.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., p. 243.

58. W. Sukiennicki, *East Central Europe During World War I: From Foreign Domination to National Independence* (New York, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 12 and 28.

For an analysis of the changing conceptions of the Polish nation see T. Lepkowski *, "Poglady* na jedno-i wieloetniczność narodu w xix w" (View on the mono- and multi-ethnicity of the nation in the nineteenth century) in *Swojskosc* i cudzoziemszczyzna w dziejach kultury polskiej* ed. Z. Stefanowska (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 232–245.

In analyzing the notion of a "multiethnic Polish nation" Lepkowski failed to make it clear that it rarely entailed a "multicultural" view of the future Poland. As a rule, Polish patriots of the first half of the nineteenth century hoped that in the restored Polish state the multiethnic peasantry would undergo (voluntarily and naturally) a process of cultural polonization, in the same way in which it had happened with the multiethnic nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Quite often they were genuinely interested in the folklore and dialects of the neighboring peasants. But they took it for granted that the only language of "high culture" in the restored Polish state would be Polish and did not even suspect that Lithuanian or Belorussian dialects (Ukraine after Taras Shevchenko was a more complicated case) could develop into literary languages of separate modern nations.

59. See Engels, "What Have the Working Classes to Do with Poland?" in K. Marx, F. Engels, *The Russian Menace to Europe* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), pp. 99–100. For analysis of Marx's and Engels' view on the Polish question, see A. Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, part IV, Chap. II (pp. 358–391).

60. J. Chlebowski, *On Small and Young Nations of Europe: Nation-Forming Processes in Ethnic Borderlands in East-Central Europe* (Wrocław, 1980), p. 19. It is interesting to note that Engels' distinction between "historical nations" and "nonhistorical peoples,"

has been found useful by some American historians of Ukrainian background. One of them, J. P. Himka, called it "the oldest expression of the difference between the two models of the nation." He commented on this as follows:

"In East-Central Europe, certain nations—Russians, Poles, Germans and Magyars—were considered 'historical,' because they had their own tradition of national life in the form of a state. 'Nonhistorical peoples'—Czechs, Slovaks, Belorussians, Ukrainians and others—'appeared' in the nineteenth century and before that they were without 'history,' i.e., without a state tradition." (J. P. Himka, *Socialism in Galicia: The Emergence of Polish Social-Democracy and Ukrainian Radicalism* [Cambridge, Mass., 1983], pp. 4–5).

Himka quotes in this connection Chlebowczyk's book and, like the Polish scholar, stresses the importance of the difference in the social structure of the two models of the nation. The Poles, he writes, were a "historical nation" not only because of their tradition of independent statehood but also because of "the survival of a Polish ruling class, the szlachta or nobility" (ibid., p. 5).

61. Cf. Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitäten Frage und die Sozialdemokratie*, 1907.

62. Lord Acton, op. cit., p. 276.

63. T. Jefferson, *Writings*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C., 1854), p. 249 (letter to Kosciuszko of June 1, 1798).

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